# THE
# Mourners Companion:
## OR,
# FUNERAL DISCOURSES
## ON
# Several Texts.

---

The Firſt Part.

---

The Second Edition.

---

By *JOHN SHOWER*.

---

ECCL. vii. 2

*It is better to go to the Houſe of* Mourning, *than to go to the Houſe of Feaſting, for that is the* End *of all Men, and the Living wil lay it to Heart.*

---

*LONDON:*

Printed for *Sam. Crouch*, at the Corner of
*Popes-Head-Alley* in *Cornhill*; and *J. Lawrence*, at the *Angel* in the *Poultry*, 1699

C1344.55.5
~~88.11~~ *
✓

HARVARD COLLEGE
1766–69.
LIBRARY

Edinb. (Scotl.) Soc. for
Propagating Christian Knowledge.

# THE EPISTLE TO THE READER.

*'TWill be generally granted that Funeral Diſcourſes are more like to affect than ordinary Sermons, becauſe of the freſh Inſtances and Examples, which give occaſion to 'em. If the matter be Inſtructive and Awakening, Practical, and Serious, they may be of ſingular Advantage to the Relations and Acquaintance of the Deceaſed; and of ſome unto other Reader's, becauſe the* Living know that they ſhall dye. *I am not without Hope that theſe may be of ſome uſe to the Friends and Relatives, at leaſt,*

*of the Deceaſed Perſons. This is ſufficient to ſatisfie me, whatever Cenſures I may incur, that I do well to publiſh 'em.*

*I know this Nation abounds with good Books of practical Divinity, beyond any other in the World, and I rejoyce in it. Methinks it ought to be a real Pleaſure to a Good Man, to ſee the various Editions of ſome plain, practical uſeful Books, becauſe we may conclude that there are many thouſands in* England *who reliſh and read ſuch Books, or ſo many would never ſell.*

*It might be expected, that I ſhould have ſaid ſomewhat more particular of the Perſon, whoſe Death occaſion'd the laſt* Diſcourſe. *Her Acquaintance may think many things Praiſe-worthy in her Character, and Converſation, will accuſe my ſilence. But my Relation*

*tion and Affection, according to the common Cuſtom and Uſage of the World, made it unfit for* me: (*and my Brother* Spademan *by his* Funeral Sermon, *which is here added, hath made it now leſs needful;*) *tho' I muſt ſay,* that Cuſtom *hath this Inconvenience attending it, that the only way almoſt by which we can attain to the true Knowledge of any Perſons Character, is thereby become an Argument againſt the publiſhing it.*

*I ſhall only requeſt of him that Reads, as a Friend who deſires thy Salvation, as ever thou hopeſt for the Comforts of a Dying man, or wilt anſwer it to God and Conſcience at laſt, that thou learn by theſe* Diſ*courſes, to* Retire *now and then, ſeriouſly to bethink thy ſelf of* thy own Death; *which is as certain as the Death of any of thoſe, whoſe Funeral*

*ral thou haſt attended, or whoſe Funeral Sermon thou haſt heard or read: And beg of God the Wiſdom to conſider* thy Latter End, *and* Prepare to follow: *And then be true to God, and thy own Conſcience, reſolvedly to Act and Live in that manner, that ſuch thoughts ſhall ſuggeſt to be wiſeſt, and moſt neceſſary. Do not refuſe or deny me this, as thou wilt anſwer it to thy Judge, who may ſummon thee before his Bar, in* an hour which thou thinkeſt not of. *Farewell.*

J. S.

---

# THE CONTENTS.

## SERMON I.

UPON the Death of Mrs. *Anne Barnardiſton*, who departed this Life *Dec.* 30, 1681. Aged Seventeen.

Phil. I. 23.

*I am in a ſtrait betwixt two, having a Deſire to depart, and be with Chriſt, which is far better.*

## SERMON II, III.

Upon the Death of Mrs. *Elizabeth Gearing*, July 2*d*, 1692. Prepare to follow.

*S.* Matth. XXIV. 44.

*Therefore be ye alſo Ready, for in ſuch an hour, as you think not of, the Son of Man cometh.*

SERMON IV.

Upon the Death of Mrs. *Elizabeth Shower*, Aug. 24, 1691. By Mr. *J. Spademan.*

XI. John 4.

*When Jeſus heard that he ſaid, This Sickneſs is not unto Death, but for the Glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.*

SERMON V.

Of Mourning for the Dead. By Mr. *Shower.*

Ezek. XXIV. 16, 17, 18.

*Son of Man, behold, I take away the Deſire of thine Eyes with a Stroke, and thou ſhalt neither mourn or weep*———

A SER-

# A
# SERMON
## PREACH'D Upon the DEATH OF Mrs. *Ann Barnardiſton*,

(DAUGHTER of
*Nathaniel Barnardiſton*, Eſq;
Late of *Hackney*:)
Who Departed this Life the 30th of
*Decemb.* 1681. at the Age of Seventeen.
With a brief Account of ſome Remarkable
Paſſages of her LIFE and DEATH.

---

By *John Shower*, Miniſter of the Goſpel.

---

Pſal. 103. 15. *As for man his days are as graſs: as a flower of the field ſo he flouriſheth.*
V. 16. *For the wind paſſeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof ſhall know it no more.*

---

The Third Edition.

---

*LONDON*: Printed for *Sam. Crouch*
at the Corner of *Popes-Head Alley* in
*Cornhil*; and *J. Lawrence*, at the *Angel*
in the *Poultry*. 1699.

# TO

# The much Honoured,

# Mrs. *Elizabeth Barnardiſton.*

MADAM,

THE *ſad Occaſion of the* Sermon, *and your Relation to* Her, *whoſe Dying Requeſt was fulfilled in my Preaching it, doth ſtile the Dedication yours. Though what I have mention'd of your excellent* Daughter, *is leſs than others would have ſaid on the ſame Subject, yet having given an Account of her Preparedneſs and Willingneſs to Dye, methinks that ſhould be conſidered as a ſufficient Argument to mitigate your Sorrow, and prevent its Exceſs. 'Tis the Apoſtles Inſtruction* concerning them who ſleep in Jeſus, *that* we ought not to ſorrow as do others, who have no hope. *Such were the* Ægyptians; *and 'tis ob-*

*ſerv'd of them, that* they *mourned longer for the Death of old* Jacob, *than his own Son* Joſeph *did. I know the* Time of her Death *gives an Accent to the Calamity: That before your Mourning-Weeds were laid aſide for one of* the beſt of Husbands, who hath a good Report of all Men, and of the Truth it ſelf; *you ſhould be forced to continue the ſame, or put on more, for the* Loſs *of* ſuch *a Child, in the* Prime *of her Youth, and Strength, and Beauty:* A Loſs *for which you do not mourn alone, ſince many others are Partners of your Grief; not by ſympathy only, as pitying you, but from a due Reſpect and Affection to her, and their own concern at her Departure.*

*But,* as your Afflictions abound, God can make your Conſolations by Chriſt abound much more: *And ſuch Loſſes as theſe, (though ſome of the ſmarteſt and moſt afflictive to humane Nature,) may turn to your ſpiritual Gain: And even* this Rod, *like that of* Aaron, *may bloſſom, and produce the* Peaceable Fruits of Righteouſneſs: *If in the want of their Compa-*

*Company, God himſelf be more depended on as* your All in All: *If their removal out of this World promote your Mortification to it; if their being taken up to Heaven, aſſiſt your Preparations, and excite your Deſires to follow. God hath already made good his Covenant Promiſe, in a very peculiar manner, to thoſe whom he* gave *and hath* taken *from you; and I truſt will do ſo as to thoſe who remain; that they may* know, and ſerve the God of their Fathers with a perfect Heart, and ſee the Felicity of his Choſen; *that they may tread in the Steps of their departed Relatives, and bear up the Name of God in their reſpective Stations; to his Glory, and your Comfort, and their Salvation. And if God ſhould not* make your Houſe to grow, yet he hath made an Everlaſting Covenant with you, well ordered in all things, and ſure, 2 *Sam.* 23. 5.

*I wiſh the following Diſcourſe may contribute any thing to your Support: or at leaſt be accepted, as an Expreſſion of my Obedience, in complying with your Requeſt thus to make it publick: And as a Teſtimony of my unfeigned Reſpect to the* Memory *of the* Deceaſed; *with a ſerious Deſire of ſome Benefit to others alſo, by ſuch a* remarkable Inſtance *of an* Early Piety, *of an* Exemplary Life, *of a* Peaceable Death. *Which* God grant, *who alone can bring Good out of Evil; all whoſe Works are perfect, and whoſe Ways are Judgment. I am,*

London, *Jan.* 25. 168$\frac{1}{2}$

MADAM,

Your moſt Affectionate

Humble Servant,

*John Shower.*

---

[redacted]

# THE SAINTS DESIRE TO Be with Chriſt.

---

## PHIL. I. 23.

*For I am in a ſtrait betwixt two, having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better.*

SAint *Paul* writing from *Rome* to the Church at *Philippi*, in this Chapter acquaints them with his Bonds and other Diſcouragements; which he tells them by their Prayers and the Aſſiſtance of the Spirit of Chriſt obtained thereby, would turn to his Salvation, and the furtherance of the Goſpel, and had already been attended with ſome conſiderable Succeſs in that kind: (*V.* 12, 13, 14.) To fortifie and confirm the Profeſſors of the *Chriſtian Faith*, and to propagate and promote *it* even in the Court of *Cæſar*, and in other places. And if Chriſt might be magnified, he was perfectly indifferent to Live or Dye; (*v.* 19, 20.) *For to me to live is Chriſt, and to dye is gain*, v. 21. His Life, he hop'd, might advance the Honour of Chriſt; and his Death would be ſubſervient to the ſame Deſign: By his further Service if he live, and by his ſufferings if he dye; by his Miniſtry ſuppoſing his Life, and by his Martyrdom in caſe of his Death.

*But if I live in the fleſh, this*, ſaith he, *is the fruit of my labour*, v. 22. or, it is worth my Labour to glorifie the Redeemer by continuing in this World. *Yet what I ſhall chooſe I wot not. For I am in a ſtrait betwixt two, having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better.*

To *Depart*, or be diſſolv'd: The Original Word is uſed, both by Chriſtian and Heathen Writers, for a Departure from any Place to return home, *Luke* 12. 36. And when the ſame Apoſtle ſpeaks of his approaching Death, he tells us, that *the time of his departure was at hand*, 2 Tim. 4. 6.

*Having a deſire* to depart, a vehement and earneſt Deſire, as the Word imports; and *to be with Chriſt*, to be *abſent from the Body, and preſent with the Lord*, 2 Cor. 5. 8. with that merciful *Saviour*, who had Compaſſion on me, when as an ignorant Blaſphemer, I perſecuted his Members; *who* call'd me to be an Apoſtle, and enabled me by his Grace, to own his Truth in the Face of Dangers, and hath hitherto comforted me in all my Tribulation. I deſire to depart, that I may be with *him*. *With him*, not with the *bleſſed Angels* or *departed Saints*, though their Society will make a part of the Heavenly Joy: Not the *former*, they are but miniſtring Spirits and menial Servants employed under him; and though they ſhine as *Stars*, yet *he* is the enlivening *Sun*, from whom they derive their Luſtre, and borrow their Glory. Not the *latter*; they have no Bleſſedneſs but by his Donation and Purchaſe, no Crowns of Life but what *He* puts on. Therefore 'tis not to be with them only or chiefly, that made them thus groan to be diſſolv'd, thus earneſtly deſire to depart, but *to be with Chriſt*: *Which is far better*, ſimply and in it ſelf more deſirable, *by much more better*, the Comparative being double in the Greek Text; *and yet I wot not what to chooſe, for I am in a ſtrait betwixt two*. *On the one hand* his Love to the *Philippians*, who needed his Preſence, (many falſe Teachers being at that time crept in among them) made him willing to abide in the Fleſh, and deſert his own Felicity for a time upon their account, *v.* 24. But the Glory of Chriſt's Preſence *on the other*, and his own unſpeakable Advantage by it, made him deſirous of a Departure; and therefore though he determines for the *former*, and was content to live, and 'tis probable had ſome ſecret Intimation from Heaven, that all his Work in this World was not yet finiſht; yet he grants the *latter* to be ſimply more eligible: *having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt, which is far Better.* Which Words are not more ſuitable to a *Funeral Solemnity*, than expreſſive of the *dying Thoughts and temper of our deceaſed Friend*, and were choſen by her as the Subject of my preſent Diſcourſe. That I may comprehend the Subſtance of the Text, according to the Deſire of the Dead, for the Benefit and Inſtruction of the Living; let us conſider,

1. When, and how far, it is *Warrantable* for a Chriſtian to *deſire* Death?

2. In what reſpects to *depart* and to be with Chriſt is far *better* than to abide in the Fleſh?

3. On what *Grounds* and *Principles* a Chriſtian may expect a future Bleſſedneſs with Chriſt, after his Departure, ſo as to encourage and excite his Deſires after it?

4. Whence it comes to paſs, that even thoſe wo acknowledge it far Better to be with Chriſt than to continue in the Body, are yet unwilling to depart in order to it? and what *Remedies* are proper to the Caſe of ſuch?

5. The *Application* of the whole, particularly with reſpect to the ſad Occaſion of our preſent Meeting.

1. When and how far is it *Warrantable* for a Chriſtian to deſire to be diſſolv'd? This Inquiry may be anſwer'd in the following Propoſitions.

1. Our *Diſſolution* and Departure as a *natural* or *penal evil*, as contrary to Nature, or as the Puniſhment of Sin, cannot poſſibly be the Object of a rational Deſire; If God hath promiſed a long Life as the Encouragement and Reward of our Obedience, and threatned an *haſty death* as the Puniſhment of Impiety; If it be univerſally true, that the Soul of Man deſires Union with the Body, and unavoidably dreads a Separation from it; If torturing Pains and loathſome Diſeaſes are the uſual Antecedents of Dying; if the Corruption of the Body, and its Impriſonment in the Grave till the general Reſurrection, be the certain Conſequent of our Diſſolution; We cannot but think of Death as a *natural Evil*, and *as* ſuch decline and fear it.

Much leſs deſirable will it appear, if conſidered as the *Wages of Sin*, and the fruit of God's Diſpleaſure, and the Juſt Sentence of his Vindictive Juſtice: But how far our Diſſolution in this latter Notion of it is changed by the Death of Chriſt in Reference to Believers, is another queſtion, and will more properly be conſidered under the third Inquiry.

2. Our Diſſolution and Departure ought *not* to be deſired, *Only as a Freedom from Temporal Evil*; as preventive of preſent Suffering,

ing, or delivering us from it. The Apoſtle doth not mention the uneaſie Circumſtances of a Priſon, or the continual Hardſhips to which he was expoſed from the Malice of his Adverſaries, as the Ground of his Deſire to depart, but *to be with Chriſt*. He knew very well that a Chriſtian may ſerve the end of God's Glory, and be uſeful to others in a State of Suffering: And therefore when he ſaith in another Place, *We that are in this Tabernacle do groan, being burden'd,* he adds the Limitation in the following Words, *not to be uncloath'd but cloath'd upon, that Mortality may be ſwallow'd up of Life.* Not meerly to avoid the Inconveniencies of our Abode in ſo poor a dwelling, but to come to the Poſſeſſion of the *Building not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens,* 2 Cor. 5. 3, 4. Not meerly to find Relief and Deliverance from our preſent Burdens, when through Melancholly or Diſcontent we are weary of Life: *Job* 7. 13. *Jon.* 4. 3. when we have ſet our Hearts on ſomewhat we cannot obtain, or ſtruggle with ſome Difficulties we cannot maſter: or are impatient under bodily Pains, or quite diſpirited by the ſad Proſpect of approaching Calamities; in ſuch a Caſe to *wiſh* for Death, and *deſire to depart,* is unbecoming the Character, the Encouragement, and Hopes of a Soldier of Chriſt. Much leſs will the Gallantry of a *Roman*, or a *Philoſopher* legitimate the Deſire of Death, only to prevent Slavery, or avoid Diſgrace, or miſs the Sight of an unwelcom Object. As *Cato* reſolv'd to dye that he might not behold *Victorious Cæſar*, whom by all means poſſible he had endeavour'd to ruine. And * *Cicero* ſaith expreſly of him, that the Reaſon of his Choice was juſt, and that *Cato* ought to dye rather than ſee the Face of a Tyrant. But we have not ſo learn'd Chriſt, for

3. We muſt *not* deſignedly precipitate or *haſten our Departure*; nor wilfully neglect any probable means to preſerve our Lives, how deſirous ſoever we are *to be with Chriſt*. We acknowledge *God* as the *Author* and *Owner* of our Lives, and ſhall we preſume to diſpoſe of what is *his*, without a Declaration of his Conſent and Order to authorize us? Are we bound by the Sixth Commandment to preſerve the Life of *our Neighbour*, and may we be negligent and careleſs of *our own*? Is not every Man nearer to himſelf than any other can be? And is not Self-murder a Violation of the Law of Nature, and condemned by a general Suffrage? And can we ſuppoſe it a ſufficient Juſtification of our ſelves, that we profeſs a Deſire to *be with Chriſt*? whereas we may not do this, or any other Evil, though the greateſt Good may come of it: *He that haſteth to be rich*, even in this Sence, *ſhall not be innocent*, Prov. 28. 16. We muſt be intirely devoted to ſerve and glorifie the Re-

---

* *Cicero in Tuſcul. quæſt. lib.* 1.

deemer as long as we live; and rather dye upon the Spot, than quit our Station without the order of our General; and yet we muſt not ſhipwrack our Health, or expoſe our Lives to hazard, without a warrant from Heaven.

4. A *Sincere* Deſire to be with Chriſt, is conſiſtent with *ſome Fear* of Death, and a reproveable *Unwillingneſs* to depart and be *diſſolv'd.* The Example of Chriſt himſelf is uſually urg'd in Vindication of a natural ſenſitive Fear of Death, *viz.* the Diſcovery thereof which he made in his Agony and Prayer in the Garden. A *Socinian only* will aſſert, that therefore he was more affected with the Fear of Death, than many of the Martyrs have been, becauſe of the exquiſite Temper and tender Conſtitution of his Body; and that there was nothing but what was natural and ordinary in his Caſe. Whereas he was to conflict with the Wrath of God, and bear the Curſe, and be wounded for our Tranſgreſſions, *&c.* otherwiſe his own Innocency and perfect Reſignation to the Will of his Father, and the Proſpect and Aſſurance of Victory and Reward, would certainly have prevented his Terrible Agony, and Bloody Sweat, and importunate Cries, *that if poſſible the Cup might paſs from him.* However, I doubt not, but a timorous Temper may render ſome Perſons extremely apprehenſive of the Pains of Death, and on that account unwilling to

depart, though they are truly *deſirous* to be with Chriſt.

Others, through the Weakneſs of Faith, or over-much concern in the Affairs of this Life, *&c.* though they grant it unſpeakably better to be preſent with the Lord, and have choſen it as their Portion and final Happineſs, may yet be loth to paſs through the dark Valley. They cannot joyn with the Apoſtle in deſiring to be *diſſolv'd*, though they can ſpeak it from their very Hearts, that they deſire to *be with Chriſt*: And that Deſire is ſo far prevailing as to keep them Upright, and yet not efficacious, ſo as to conquer the Fears of interpoſing Death. How unwelcom was the Meſſage of Death to an *upright Hezekiah*, even then when he could plead his Integrity before the Lord? *he turned his face to the wall, and wept*, and beſought the Lord that he might not dye, as is evident by *Iſa.* 38. 3, 5, *v.* compar'd. But I dare not ſay, his unwillingneſs to dye at that time, was a ſinful Weakneſs, becauſe he might well be concern'd for the Kingdom after his deceaſe, leaſt the Faithful ſhould be ſtaggered, and the People revolt to Idolatry, there being no viſible *Succeſſor* to advance the Reformation ſo hopefully begun; for *Manaſſes* was not then born, being but *twelve* Years old when he began to reign, and we know that *Hezekiah* had *fifteen* Years added to his Life, 2 *Kings* 20. 6.

5. Though we deſire to be with Chriſt; we muſt not be *Peremptory* as to any *determinate Time*; but refer our ſelves to God's good Pleaſure for the Seaſon of our Departure. Though with *Job* we ſhould be ready *to anſwer, when God doth call*, yet with Humility and Reſignation we muſt expect his Summons, and *wait till our change come:* Job 14. 15. though the *days of our appointed Time* ſhould be longer than ordinary. Although in a dutiful Obſervance to our Heavenly Father we ſhould be willing to return Home as ſoon as he ſhall pleaſe to call us, and the Felicity of his Preſence ſhould render it deſirable; yet his ſoveraign Will, and unerring Wiſdom muſt be practically acknowledg'd in Reference to the *Seaſon*. He alone, of whom and to whom are all things, is fit to determine how *long* we ſhall tarry, or how *ſoon* we ſhall depart: even the Light of Nature may teach us this. And therefore, when ever we pray, *Thy Kingdom come*, we muſt not limit the Holy One of *Iſrael* by preſcribing the *Time*; but immediately ſubjoyn, with reſpect to *that*, *Thy Will be done*.

*Seneca* Epiſt. 24. 61.

6. Not the Time only, but the *Kind and Manner*, of our Diſſolution muſt be referr'd to God. Some have wiſht for a *Sudden Death*, and others have pray'd againſt it. Some have deſired to dye by one Diſeaſe, and others by another.

Some Holy Perſons of a timerous Temper and a tender Body would chooſe to depart by a *Conſumption*; not only as allowing them a *longer* Time to prepare for Death, but as an *eaſier* kind of Death than ſeveral others: Whereas, beſides the Uncertainty and Deceitfulneſs of that Diſeaſe, 'tis more than poſſible, that the Languiſhment of that pining Sickneſs may be as irkſome and inſupportable, as the ſhorter Pains of more violent Diſtempers. But God is the Judge, (to whom we muſt ſubmit, as the wiſe Diſpoſer of all Events) not only of the *Time*, but the *Manner* of our Departure: not only how *long*, we ſhall Sojourn in this earthly Tabernacle, but *what* ſhall diſſolve, and pull it down.

7. *Our Deſire to depart*, and to be with Chriſt, *muſt not be raſh and haſty*, but the Reſult of many ſerious and deliberate Thoughts, comparing both States together, and underſtanding the Difference. The Apoſtle knew his Duty in Compliance with the Will of God, and therefore for the Service of his Maſter, and the Advantage of the *Philippians*, was willing to live: But he knew withal, it was far better in it ſelf to depart that he might be with Chriſt, and *as ſuch* he deſired it. And a due *Compariſon* between our preſent and our future Life, our Inconveniencies and Sufferings in this World, and our Felicity in the next, is proper to regulate and quick-

en our Deſires to be abſent from the Body, and preſent with the Lord. Therefore,

2. *In what reſpect is it far Better to be with Chriſt, than to abide in the fleſh?* what is the difference between *What we are*, and *What we ſhall be?* that the Expectation of the *Latter* ſhould even make Death and Diſſolution deſirable in order to it. And here it will be neceſſary to conſider,

1. The Expreſſion of *our Felicity* after Death here uſed by the Apoſtle, *Being with Chriſt.*

2. In *what Reſpects 'tis far better* to Depart, and be Abſent from the Body, that we may be preſent with him.

1. The Expreſſion of our *future Bleſſedneſs*, by *being with Chriſt*. Till we are preſent with the Lord, and ſee him Face to Face, and know as we are known, we muſt content our ſelves with ſuch Repreſentations of *it*, as God is pleas'd to reveal in his Word: Such as our ignorant earthly Minds can bear, and may be moſt affected with But when once the Vail of Darkneſs is remov'd by Death, *we ſhall ſee him as he is*, and all our Faculties be purified and inlarg'd, and ſuited to the bleſſed Company and Work above. We ſhall ſee *him whom our Souls love*, and reap a Happineſs by doing ſo, bigger than our preſent Hopes, and far above our higheſt Thoughts about it: For *in his preſence is fulneſs of Joy, and at his right hand are Everlaſting Pleaſures.*

And can we imagine, that a Bleſſedneſs, purchas'd by infinite Merit, contriv'd by infinite Wiſdom, and prepar'd by infinite Power, and beſtow'd at length through infinite Grace, will in any thing be defective? Doth not our Apoſtle deſcribe it *Best*, by aſſuring us it cannot be deſcrib'd; that 'tis greater than we ever ſaw, beyond what we ever heard, and far above what we can ever think? Doth not the very Hopes of ſeeing him, revive our drooping Hearts? Oh what will be the Glory of that bleſſed Sight! is not the Pledge and Aſſurance of it by the Harbinger of his Holy Spirit exceeding comfortable? Oh what tranſcendent Satisfaction will his Preſence give us! We now comfort our ſelves with the Contemplation, and one another with the Diſcourſe of it: and if our dark Faith and our faint Hopes, can give us ſuch a Joyful Proſpect of what ſhall be conſequent to our Diſſolution; into what raviſhing Joys ſhall we enter, by the open Viſion and full Enjoyment? Is the Encouragement and Support of a Chriſtian now, from *his Preſence with us* here; and will it not be far better, to be *preſent with him* above, *to be for ever with the Lord*? When we ſhall never queſtion his Love to us, or doubt of ours to him, but have a full Aſſurance of the one, and a glorious Exerciſe of the other?

And becauſe our Knowledge will be ſtill encreaſing, our Flames of Love ſhall ſtill riſe higher. But what additional Bliſs the Soul ſhall have by the Reſurrection of the Body, and the great Tranſactions of the Judgment Day, we know but in part. Bleſſed be God we know ſo much in this imperfect State, *enough* to excite our Deſires, and quicken our Preparations, and encourage our Perſeverance. And let's bleſs him more, that he hath prepared *ſuch a Glory* for us in the Preſence of the Redeemer, as we cannot fully underſtand, till Death convey us to him.

But *to be with Chriſt*, is not only eligible in it ſelf, as expreſſive of our future Glory; but much rather to be deſired, if conſidered *comparatively*. Therefore,

2. *In what reſpects* is it preferrable to an abode in the Fleſh, ſo as to make us *rather* chooſe to *depart*, that we may be with him; than continue in the Body, and be abſent from the Lord?

1. Is not a State of *Reſt* and *Joy* much more deſireable, than to be continually harraſs'd with *Trouble* and *Sorrow*? We ordinarily begin this World in Tears, and ſolemnize our own Nativity, as we do the Funerals of our deareſt Friends: as if we were then ſenſible of that univerſal Curſe, which hath afflicted Mankind ſince the firſt Tranſgreſſion; and had a clear Proſpect of the Miſeries we are born to, and muſt afterward ſuffer: And in all the Portions of our little time, what and how many do we every where encounter!

How many things are there which we find are wanting, both as to our Accompliſhments,and Enjoyments? and how much are we diſappointed, if we look for Satisfaction from *the Luſts of the fleſh, the luſts of the eyes, and the pride of life? which,* ſaith the Apoſtle, *is all that is in the World:* 1 Joh. 2. 16. Earthly Pleaſures, Wealth, and Honour.

Do we not find, that what doth rejoyce and pleaſe us one day, appears with another Face when we view it next? or if we think it would pleaſe us ſtill, 'tis gone e're we are aware, and with all our Skill and Power we cannot protract its Duration. Do not evil Accidents overtake us on a ſudden? and our moſt probable Deſigns miſcarry in the Birth? As if all things were governed by Chance, and there were no Intelligent Director to overſee and regulate the Affairs of the World, and the Actions and Conditions of Men. Inſomuch, *that the Race is not to the ſwift, nor the Battel to the ſtrong, nor Bread to the wiſe, nor Riches to men of underſtanding, nor Favour to men of skill, but time and chance happens to them all,* Eccl. 11. 9. Our Pleaſures flatter and deceive us, and our Afflictions trouble and diſquiet us. We are impoſed upon by our Senſes, and miſguided by our Paſſions; croſs'd in our Deſires, and fruſtrated in our Hopes; griev'd by preſent Evils, or perplext with the Fears of future; and our Spirits for the moſt part diſcompos'd, either by perſonal or relative Calamities. Some rueful Spectacle is ever now and then preſented before our Eyes; ſome evil Tidings, or unpleaſant Sound doth grate our Ears. We bewail the Wants of the Poor, which we cannot ſupply; or envy the Proſperity of the Wicked, which we cannot hinder; or grieve at the Afflictions of the Righteous, which we cannot remedy.

We have ſome ſuffering Friend with whom to ſympathize, ſome diſtreſſed or deceaſed Relation to lament; ſome Unhappineſs of our own, or of thoſe we love, to be concerned for. Beſides the Treachery and Unfaithfulneſs of our ſeeming Friends; the Hatred and Malice of our open Enemies; the ſcandalous Actions of profeſſing Chriſtians; their Diviſions and Animoſities among themſelves, and their deſpiteful Uſage and Entertainment from the World; the Complaints of the Miſerable, the Groans of the Sick, the Cries of the Oppreſſed, and our own bodily Infirmities, Weakneſſes and Pains, *&c.* Enough one would think to make us deſire to depart, and render us extreamly willing to lye down and dye, (if God think fit) that we may be at Reſt; eſpecially having the Expectation of *being for ever with the Lord.* For otherwiſe even * Heathens have ſpoken excellently of the Advantages of Death, as the Period of our preſent Sorrows.

---

* *M.Anton.lib. Arr. Epict. lib.*4. *c.*10. *Boeth. Conſol. Philoſ. l.* 1.

2. Is not a State of *Holineſs and perfect Purity*, far better than a Life of *Temptation, Corruption* and *Sin?* How are we now buffeted by *Satan?* by his ſinful Suggeſtions, his ſubtile Devices and Snares, and his fiery Darts? And by that Means our Integrity aſſaulted, our Peace of Conſcience unſetled, and our Perſeverance indangered?

Our Conflict with him is ſo difficult, and the Iſſue of the Battel. as to what depends on us, ſo very uncertain; that we are often ready to throw down our Arms, and give up all as Loſt. For though he be a conquer'd and baffled Adverſary, through the Victory which our Captain hath obtain'd againſt him; yet we cannot now Triumph over him, as hereafter we ſhall. And is it not far better to abandon *this World, of which he is the God*, 1 Cor. 4. 4. and get above that *Air of which he is the Prince*, Eph. 2. 2. that we may be with Chriſt.

Moreover, how doth our depraved Nature continually caſt forth Mire and Dirt? what remaining Filthineſs is there yet to be purg'd? what powerful Luſts to be mortified and ſubdued? which indiſpoſe us for Spiritual Duties, and derive a Damp and Deadneſs upon all our Religious Exerciſes; which cool our Zeal, and abate the Fervour of our Spirits in the Service of our Redeemer; which weaken our Confidence in Prayer, and ſhame our Faces before the Lord in ſecret. And is it not far better to part with *the Body of Fleſh,* that thereby we may be rid of *this body of ſin and death,* Rom. 7. 24. and be like our Saviour in perfect Purity?

Do we not complain of our Ignorance of Divine Truths, and the Bleſſed Myſteries of the Goſpel, notwithſtanding all our Means of Knowledge? of our Earthlineſs and Unbelief? of unbecoming Thoughts of God and Holy Things? of proud Imaginations and carnal Reaſonings againſt his Works and Word? of languiſhing and imperfect Graces to be recovered and perfected, *&c*? And is it not *better* to be with Chriſt, where that which is imperfect ſhall be done away?

Is not God diſhonour'd and provok'd, by our frequent Omiſſions, and ſlight Performances of Duty? Do we not reſiſt and quench and ſadden his Holy Spirit? and are we not often griev'd by God's Rebukes and Frowns? by the Wounds and ſmart Regrets of our own Conſcience? ſo that we *remember God, and are troubled,* and cry out in the Bitterneſs of our Souls, *Hath he forgotten to be gracious, and will he be merciful no more?* Are not our holy Purpoſes inconſtant, and our beſt Reſolutions wavering and unſteddy? and very quickly, very eaſily ſhatter'd by the Breath of a ſmall Temptation?

Have we not a conſtant Watch to keep over our Hearts and Ways? a perpetual War to manage with the infernal Trinity, the *World*, the *Fleſh*, and the *Devil*? and do we know his Rage, and Malice, and Serpentine Policy, with the Multitude, Strength and Power of his Temptations? How often we have been foil'd already, and how ſoon may we be ſo again? and ſhall we not be deſirous of a ſinleſs State in the Preſence of Chriſt; where no Tempter, no Temptation ſhall ever be admitted?

Yea, had we no Corruption, or Sin of our own to be delivered from; yet our Concern at God's Diſhonour by the Sins of others, ſhould make us willing to depart; as much more deſirable than our abode on *Earth*: Which *is given into the hands of the wicked, and defiled by its inhabitants* Job 24. 9. Iſa. 24. 4. Where the very Air is infected with Oaths and Blaſphemies, prophane Diſcourſe and filthy Talk: Where the very Being of a God is queſtion'd, his Providence deny'd, and his Authority mockt: Where the Goſpel of Chriſt is diſparag'd and deſpiſed, his Laws contradicted, his Worſhip polluted, his Inſtitutions ſubverted, and his Holy Name made a Cloak for Licentiouſneſs, and his faithful Servants trampl'd on by the Foot of Pride, and ſcorn'd by Men at Eaſe, and forc'd to own his Truth with the Peril of their Lives. And can we ſay, *It is good to be here?* or is it not far better to forſake ſuch a Place and Company, that we may be with Chriſt.

3. Let us conſider what are *the Grounds and Principles by which a Chriſtian is aſſured of this Bleſſedneſs in the Preſence of Chriſt after his Diſſolution.* This Inquiry is neceſſary, becauſe the Diſcourſe of our future Bliſs with Chriſt, cannot be ſuppoſed to have any Effect or Influence upon us, to make us deſire our Departure, while we disbelieve or make a doubt of the Matter.

I hope it were needleſs to prove the Poſſibility of the Soul's Exiſtence, in a State of Separation from the Body.

*Whether in the Body or out of the Body*, 2 Cor. 12. 2. would not have been a doubt to this great Apoſtle, if he could not poſſibly have liv'd but *in it.* Neither could he deſire to depart that he might *be with Chriſt*, if after his departure he ſhould *not be at all.* And ſuppoſing the Exiſtence of the Soul notwithſtanding the Diſſolution of the Body, we have as full an Aſſurance, as the Nature of the thing is capable of, that holy Souls ſhall be preſent with the Lord in Glory, when abſent from the Body: 1 *Theſ.* 4. 17. *Joh.* 17. 24. *Mat.* 24. 25. *Rev.* 3. 22, &c.

But becauſe the Text hath a ſpecial Relation to *Chriſt*, and to be with him, is that Bleſſedneſs, on the account whereof 'tis deſireable to depart; I ſhall only mention *his Death* and *Reſurrection*, as a ſufficient Ground, to confirm our Faith in the Certainty of being with him, and to excite our Deſires of a Departure in order to it.

1. *The Death of Chriſt.* He hath cancell'd the Hand-writing againſt us, and put away Sin, which is the Sting of Death, by the Death of the Croſs: *Eph.* 1. 7. *A way is now open for us into the holy of holies by his blood,* Heb. 10. 19. not for our Prayers only, but our Perſons. He hath wounded the Head of the old Serpent, even by permitting him to bruiſe his Heel, by crucifying his humane Nature, (which was only *Veſtigium Deitatis*). As *Benaiah* ſlew the *Egyptian* with his own Spear, 2 *Sam.* 23. 21. Having *deſtroyed death, and him that had the Power of it, and delivered thoſe who were all their Live time ſubject to bondage, through the fear of death,* Heb. 2. 15.

He hath ſet his Foot on the Neck of this Adverſary, diſarm'd it of its Weapon, and robb'd it of its Sting, and aboliſh'd the Uglineſs and Poyſon of it. He hath diſmounted *Hell and Damnation, from behind him that ſat on the Pale horſe*, Rev. 6. 8. Whether the *firſt Adam* were buried in *Calvary*, where the *ſecond* was crucified, as ſome affirm, I need not enquire; we know that his Death was our Victory, and his Croſs may be our Triumph; ſince the Devil is conquered, and Death ſanctified, and the Grave perfum'd by his Burial, ſo that we need not be afraid to lodge in a Sepulchre, where our Lord himſelf hath ſlept.

Yea ſince the Effuſion of his Blood, there is an amiable Ruddineſs in the Face of Death: for that which was the Inſtrument of Juſtice, is now the Meſſenger of Peace and Joy; that which was the Gate of Hell, is the Way to Life. He hath brought *Sweetneſs out of the Strong, and meat out of the Eater*; 1 Cor. 3.21. and therefore Death, as well as Life, is reckon'd in the Inventory of the Riches of the Saints. *All things are yours,* becauſe *you are Chriſt's, and Chriſt is God's.*

2. *His Reſurrection* and *Exaltation.* His riſing from the Dead not only diſcovers the Poſſibility of our Reſurrection, and gives us a *Pledge and Aſſurance* of it, as declaring the Sufficiency and Acceptation of his Sacrifice; that therefore the Dead in Chriſt ſhall live, and with his Dead Body ariſe: *Rom.* 8. 11 *Iſa.* 26. 19. But being punctually effected according to his Prediction and Promiſe, it confirms the Truth of all his Word, and ſeals the Promiſe of Eternal Life unto all Believers. He hath opened the Priſon-doors, and loos'd the Bands of Death, and roll'd away the heavy Stones from the Graves of his People; he is now become the *firſt Fruits of them that ſleep in Jeſus:* And hath *the Keys of Death and Hell*; Rev. 1. 18. Even the two moſt formidable Enemies are under *his* Dominion, *who though once he were dead, doth now live for evermore.* And for this very End did God raiſe him up, that *our faith and hope might be*

*be in him,* in Reference to the Bleſſedneſs of another Life, 1 *Pet.* 1. 21.

Yea, ſaith the Apoſtle, concerning that, *he raiſed him from the dead, no more to ſee corruption,* Act. 13. 34. God ſaid, *I will give you the ſure mercies of David*; or an *Everlaſting Covenant,* which Death ſhall not diſſolve, *Iſa.* 55. 3. And his being riſen, is the Ground of our Faith and Hope, that the Promiſe ſhall be fulfill'd. For the Reſurrection of Chriſt is the Evidence, of the Validity and Efficacy of his Death and Sacrifice: and a ſufficient Proof, that his precious Blood ſhed upon the Croſs, was the *Blood of an Everlaſting Covenant,* Heb. 13. 20. Eſtabliſhing a Covenant of Grace, and making it truly Everlaſting: for we know that *he is a Prieſt for ever, after the power of an endleſs Life,* Heb. 7. 16. And therefore *know,* to our unſpeakable Satisfaction, Incouragement, and Joy, *in whom we have believed, and that he is able to keep unto that day, what we have committed to him*; 2 Tim. 1. 12 *to perfect what he hath begun*; Phil. 1. 6. *and at laſt preſent us blameleſs before the preſence of his glory with exceeding Joy,* Jude 24. *v. For our Life being hid with him in God,* we are fully aſſured, *that when he, who is our Life ſhall appear, we ſhall appear with him in glory*; Col. 3. 3, 4. *and becauſe he lives, we ſhall live alſo*; *and when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is,* 1 Joh. 3. 2.

4. Let us conſider, *Whence it comes to paſs,*

*that notwithſtanding the Bleſſedneſs of being with Chriſt, and our Aſſurance of it by his Death and Reſurrection, that yet we are ſo backward and unwilling to depart? What is the true reaſon, why ſo many of thoſe who acknowledge it far better to be with Chriſt,* yet cannot ſay with the Apoſtle, That *they deſire to be diſſolv'd, that they may be with him?*

1. *The Weakneſs of Faith concerning the Inviſible World, and the future Glory of the Saints,* is the Reaſon why ſo many Chriſtians are unwilling to dye. They are very ſenſible of the Inconveniencies of their preſent abode; they complain to God and Men of Corruption, Temptation, and Sin, and they hear of a bleſſed Deliverance from all theſe by Death, and a perfect Felicity in the Preſence of the Redeemer after their Diſſolution; but *unbelief makes them ſtagger at the Promiſe.* They are not fully ſatisfied that ſuch a tranſcendent Glory will be conſequent to Dying: Did they but ſoundly believe the Teſtimony and Revelation which God hath given in his Word concerning it, they would chooſe to be *abſent from the body.* Some of the Ignorant Heathens have been deſperate in their Choice of Death, only as the Period of preſent Calamities: but others who were doubtful of the Conſequence, have yet entertained it with an hearty Welcome. As *Socrates* for Inſtance, who profeſs'd, That *he ought not to fear Death, becauſe he could not tell whether it*

*were good or evil:* And ſhall not we who underſtand the Grounds and Principles, the Greatneſs and Certainty, of a future Bleſſedneſs after Death, be as willing to depart? *A confirmed Faith* is therefore neceſſary and adviſeable in the preſent Caſe; and the rather, that thereby we may *quench the fiery darts of Satan*; who if he cannot hinder us of our Crown, would rob us of our joyful Proſpect of it; if he cannot prevent our future Glory, would render us dejected in our Paſſage thither; if he cannot prevail to exclude, and baniſh us for ever from the Preſence of Chriſt, would darken our preſent Comfort by the Deſire and Hope of it; but more eſpecially at the Proſpect and *Approach of Death*, for *that is his hour, and the power of darkneſs.*

But by *this Shield of Faith*, we may be able to ſtand even in *that evil day* of our Diſſolution, *Eph.* 6. 11, 16.

2. *The Pains of Death.* They pray that God would haſten his glorious Kingdom, and bring them to it; and believe it to be moſt eligible to be with Chriſt; yet are loth their own Prayers ſhould be anſwered, and the End and Object of their Faith obtain'd, through the Diſcouraging Apprehenſions they admit of a dying Hour.

Would we not be with the Lord, and know him better,; and love him more, and enjoy him fully? And ſhall we ſtick at a *little Pain*, as introductory to ſo great a Happineſs?

neſs? A Pain that will ſpeedily convey us to Eternal Eaſe and Reſt; which thouſands of Holy Souls in Glory have endured more of, than we can fear.

But ſuppoſe the Agonies of Death are ne're ſo frightful to Fleſh and Blood, *hath not our Redeemer a Rod and Staff to comfort us in the dark Valley?* Pſ. 23. 4. Doth he not know what it is to dye, and how much we dread it? doth he not underſtand our Weakneſs, remember our Frailty, pity our Infirmities, and bid us ask for Support and Strength? yea, hath he not promis'd, that *when Heart and Fleſh ſhall fail*, that *he will be the Strength of our Hearts, and our Portion for ever*, Pſal. 73. 26. Shall ignorant hopeleſs *Heathens*, without God in this World, without the Expectation of being with Chriſt in the next, be ſo deſirous of Immortality, as to diſpatch themſelves, and be their own Executioners, to force and eſcape from the Body? And ſhall we reſiſt and ſtruggle, draw back and fear, object and be unwilling, when our Saviour calls us to endleſs and unſpeakable Felicity? Is not this the laſt Experiment of our Faith, and Patience, and holy Reſolution? the laſt Eſſay of our Chriſtian Courage? Are not the antecedent Pains of dying the Fruit of Sin, no leſs than the Throws and Pangs of Travelling Women? And are the latter tolerable in hopes of Children, and their own deliverance; and may we not ſupport the Former by the Aſſiſtance of a greater and better Hope? Are they at all conſiderable and worthy our fear, if put in the Ballance with the promiſed Salvation to follow on our departure? Are they comparable in the Nature *of Evil*, to the bleſſed Life they lead us to in the Nature *of Good*? or comparable to the Gripes of Conſcience, which unpardon'd Sinners meet with in Life and Death? yea, do we not think them greater, and make them worſe by our fooliſh fears, than moſt do find them? Is not the Sting of Death remov'd, and the Heavenly Manſions prepar'd and promis'd? And is it a reaſonable Requeſt, that God ſhould vary from his ſettled Courſe, and fixed Law, upon our ſole Account? Will nothing elſe content and pleaſe us, but that Heaven muſt deſcend to Earth, or we be in a moment tranſlated thither? to prevent our Pain, and ſuperſede the neceſſity of our Diſſolution, which we fear will be ſo attended?

As a proper Remedy in the preſent Caſe, let us familiarize the Thoughts of *Death*, by frequent, ſerious Meditation. Let us view it oftner in our way, that it may not meet us with ſo much Terror at our Journeys end. Let us admit the Thoughts of a Departure with particular Application to our ſelves, and improve the Funerals of our Friends, as a ſeaſonable *Memento* that our own is near. Let us lay open the Picture of Death naked to our view, and urge it to our Hearts with the infinite Glory that immediately ſucceeds; and take in the Death and Promiſe of Chriſt, as our Aſſurance of it. And this will reconcile us more to a Departure, and help to overcome our unreaſonable Fears of Pain and Sickneſs antecedent to it.

3. *The weakneſs and declenſion of our Love to Chriſt*, is another Ground of our Unwillingneſs *to depart, and to be with him.* To a degenerate Soul, that is deſtitute of the Love of Chriſt, an *Everlaſting Diſtance* would be more deſirable than a *Local Preſence:* For *that* could not make him happy; he would ſtill be as far remov'd from Bliſs, by being with the Lord, as the Centre of a Milſtone in the bottom of the Sea would be from moiſture. But the Company and Converſe of thoſe we Love, muſt needs be eligible; and the more we love them, the ſtronger will ſtill be our deſire of being with them, and the more impatient ſhall we be of every delay. And is it not the Senſe, and ſecret Language of our Hearts, *Whom have we in Heaven but Chriſt?* And are we not deſirous to forſake this Earth, to enjoy his Preſence? Certainly, the growth, and ſtrength, and exerciſe of Holy Love to Chriſt, would even render our Diſſolution grateful in order to it; and make our Hearts rejoyce at the approach of Death, *as it did old* Jacob'*s, to ſee the Waggons* that are ſent to fetch us to our *beloved Jeſus, who is Lord of that Country whither we are going.*

4. *Immoderate Love to this preſent World, and our Temporal Life.* Were we crucified to *fleſhly Pleaſures* and *ſenſual Joys*, to *worldly Honours* and *earthly Riches*; we ſhould leſs regret the Thoughts of Dying, and more heartily deſire *to be with Chriſt*. For as the Pangs of Death are not ordinarily ſo violent and intolerable to one whoſe ſtrength is waſted by a pining Sickneſs, as to him who is Arreſted ſuddenly in his full ſtrength and vigour; ſo will he more eaſily leave this World, who for ſome time paſt hath been dying to it. Were we more *crucified to the World, and the World to us by the Croſs of Chriſt*, Gal.6.14. we ſhould not ſo affectionately hug the Carkaſs of a dead Enemy, whom we our ſelves have crucified and ſlain; but wait for the Time, and long for the happy Hour when we ſhall leave it, and be gone to our Eternal Reſt. Let us therefore make uſe of all the Chriſtian Methods of Mortification, and look on this World as a ſtrange Place, and our ſelves as *Pilgrims and Strangers* here; as Exiles from our own Country, and haſtening to it: And we cannot but wiſh our ſelves at home, and deſire a departure as neceſſary thereto; and in the *interim*, ſigh to think of the vaſt diſproportion and difference between the ſlender Entertainments of our Inn, and the plentiful Proviſions of our Father's Houſe.

5. *Blotted Evidences, and the want of Aſſurance*, concerning our Title to the Heavenly

Glory. And this we all pretend, as the reaſon of our Unwillingneſs to die. A *Sadducee* is loth to die, leſt he ſhould not be at all; an *Unprepared Sinner*, for fear of being Miſerable; and a *Doubting Chriſtian*, becauſe he knows not whether Happineſs or Miſery ſhall be his Portion after his Departure: For were we well aſſured we ſhould be with Chriſt for ever, we could not be ſo backward and unwilling to be diſſolv'd. Had we any better grounds to hope that Sin was pardon'd, and God our Covenant-Father; that Heaven would be our Inheritance; and we ſhould not come into Condemnation; we might rejoyce to think of our departure, when and how it ſhall pleaſe God to call us. When the *Pſalmiſt* could ſay, *The Lord is my Shepherd*; he could boldly venture upon Death, and walk through the Valley of Darkneſs *without fear of evil*, Pſal. 23. 4, 6. But when Diſtreſs had brought his Sin to remembrance, and made him doubt of his Condition, he cries, *O ſpare me a little longer, that I may recover ſtrength, before I go hence, and be no more ſeen*, Pſal. 39. 13. Could you ſay with the Spouſe of Chriſt in the *Canticles*, *My beloved is mine, and I am his*, Cant. 6. 3. you might chearfully joyn your *Amen*, when you hear the Spirit and the Bride ſay in the *Revelations*, *Come Lord Jeſus, come quickly*, Rev. 20. 22.

Therefore Try your State, and Examine your ſelves afreſh; and endeavour with your utmoſt

Care and Diligence, to obtain a well grounded *Aſſurance*, founded on the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience; by comparing the Promiſes of Remiſſion, and Eternal Life, with the requiſite Qualifications and Conditions of them. For *if our hearts condemn us not, we ſhall have confidence towards God*, 1 John 3. 21. even in a dying hour. To which end, let us endeavour, by daily Acts of Repentance, to obtain a daily Pardon. Let us ſum up our Accounts at the foot of every Page; I mean, reflect every Night, on the Paſſages of the preceding Day; that we may reſt on our Beds with the ſenſe of a daily Pardon, and be as fit to die as we are to ſleep.

6. *Our fond Affections to our Friends on Earth*, may make us loth to die, though we hope to be with Chriſt in Heaven. But is not his Boſom more deſirable, than the Arms and Embraces of our deareſt Friends, and neareſt Relations? Muſt we not abandon and *hate them all for his ſake*? Luke 14. 26. *i. e.* uſe them as contemptible and hated things, if they keep us from him. Have we not ſolemnly engag'd to do ſo by our Covenant with God? and ſhall we not ſtand to our Agreement? Is there no difference between our *Friends on Earth*, and our *beloved Saviour*? How often is an unactive Pity vouchſafed in the room of Succour, when *they* need our Aſſiſtance, or *we* intercede for *theirs*! We know, if they are *unholy*, they ſhall for ever be baniſh'd from the Preſence of

Chriſt; and we may well be aſhamed to be unwilling to die on their account: And if they are *holy*, tho' we ſhall not return to them, yet we know that they ſhall ſhortly come to us. And cannot God inſtruct them in his Fear, order their Conditions, diſpoſe of their Affairs, provide for their Comfort, and anſwer all our Prayers in reference to them, after our Departure? yea, hath he not often done ſo?

Have we any Friends on Earth, that are every way ſo accompliſh'd, as alway to delight and pleaſe us? Or are we ſo perfectly wiſe and good, as never to diſguſt and diſoblige them? Is there not ſome Selfiſhneſs, Deſign, and private Intereſt; ſome Hypocriſie, Flattery, and Diſſimulation; ſome Inequality, Unſuitableneſs, or Inconſtancy in our Friendſhips here? Are not the Beſt of thoſe we love, Ignorant and Miſtaken, Erroneous, Deceived, Weak and Impotent; and as likely to defile, and grieve us by their Corruption, as to edifie and rejoyce us by their Grace? But hereafter, when that which is imperfect is done away, they ſhall all have ſuitable Qualifications to recommend them to our moſt ſincere and conſtant Affection, and be every way more fit for our Content and Joy. We ſhall then be never weary of each others Company. We ſhall fully underſtand one anothers Mind. We ſhall live in perfect Harmony, and full Satisfaction, without the dread of Abſence, or fear of Separation

tion. Now if we have ſome Friends, we have many Enemies; but in the preſence of Chriſt there ſhall be *none* but *Friends*, and ſuch as ſhall for ever be *ſo*; their Perſons being more amiable, and their Society more deſirable than now it can be. Now if we are pleaſed with their Converſe, we may quickly loſe it, and the *deſire of our eyes be taken from us*, by a ſudden ſtroke, *Ezek.* 24. 16. that we know not how to value or love them, till 'tis too late. And ſhall we be unwilling, *on their Account*, to *depart, and be with Chriſt*, ſince they are haſtning after us, and after a few days abſence, we ſhall meet them again, and dwell with them for ever?

5. The *Application* remains, which ſhall be only in Four Particulars, as *Inferences* from what hath been ſaid.

1. We may hence take notice of the *great Efficacy and Power of the Chriſtian Faith and Hope*. That notwithſtanding our fondneſs and affection to the Body, and the contrariety of Death to our ſenſitive Inclinations; that yet this Faith and Hope can urge us to deſire a Diſſolution in order to it.

2. We may hence infer, That *the Soul doth not ſleep in the Grave with its Companion the Body, until the Reſurrection*, but immediately paſs into a ſtate of Bliſs. For the Apoſtle to abide in the Fleſh, was more expe-

dient for the *Philippians: For him to live, would be Chriſt*, Ver. 21. *i. e.* For the advancement of his Glory: How then was it *better to depart?* or in what *ſtrait* could he be, whether he ſhould chooſe a longer Life, or a preſent departure, if no Bleſſedneſs were expected till the Final Judgment? And why doth he mention his *being with Chriſt*, as that which made *Death deſirable?* Is not the Preſence of Chriſt with us on Earth, and our ſerving the Ends of his Glory in this World, much more eligible than to *ſleep* in the Grave till *Dooms day?*

3. Is it *better to depart, and be with Chriſt*, than abide in the Body? Then the Fable of *Purgatory is hereby exploded.* Were we to be tranſported by our Diſſolution, only from *leſſer* Pains to *greater*, or from a Life of Sorrow, to a State of Suffering, (ſuch as the *Romaniſts* imagine their *Purgatory* to be, equivalent to the Torments of Hell in the Extremity of them, though different in Duration,) how were it far *better to depart*, that we may *be with Chriſt?*

4. Is it the Object of a Chriſtians deſire, *to depart, and be with Chriſt?* And is that far better than to continue in the Body? Then *let us not grieve immoderately at the departure of thoſe who have obtain'd their wiſh, and enjoy their deſire.*

Did they long to be with Chriſt, and chooſe to be diſſolv'd in order to it? And is it their unſpeakable Satisfaction that they are ſo?

And do we expreſs our Love and Kindneſs to them, by repining at their Felicity? Shall their deſired Repoſe, and Reſt, and Happineſs, be our Torment, Grief, and Sorrow? Would we, that contrary to their own well-grounded Inclinations, they ſhould continue longer here on Earth; or return back again from Heaven, meerly to gratifie our fond Affections? Have they obtain'd a ſpeedy Victory after a ſhort Conflict? and receiv'd the Crown of Life, as ſoon almoſt as they begun their Chriſtian Race; the glorious Recompence of Reward, though they had wrought but *one hour* in the Vineyard, when others muſt labour *twelve*? And ſhall we mourn like utter Strangers to the Chriſtian Faith and Hope? Would we delay the Glory of God in their Salvation, and defer their Felicity in the bleſſed Preſence of the Redeemer; and be content that a Voice ſhould be wanting in the Heavenly Quire, rather than *we* be Sadn'd by their departure?

Would Parents have their Children continue in their Swadling-Cloaths? Or when advanc'd to riper Years, wiſh them back again to Infancy, and hinder their Poſſeſſion of that Inheritance which they are born to, and diſpos'd to enter on, and enjoy?

Are not you your ſelves haſtning to the Grave, and hope e're long to be with Chriſt? And is it not a refreſhing Thought, to conſider, that your *Treaſure* is there before you;

*with their Father and your Father*, *with their God and Saviour and yours*; I mean, your Holy Children and Friends, whom you dearly Love?

The Primitive Church was wont to Solemnize the Funerals of Holy Perſons, with ſinging Pſalms and Hymns of Praiſe to God, for their Deliverance and Felicity obtained by Dying: And ſhall we refuſe to be comforted, for the Death of thoſe who ſleep in Jeſus, and deſired to do ſo; *As if in this Life only we had Hope in Chriſt?*

Something, 'tis true, of Grief and Sorrow, muſt be allow'd to Nature, Duty, Cuſtom, and Contracted Friendſhip, and the Honour of the Deceas'd; for they are reckon'd to die miſerable, who are hurl'd into the Grave without the attendance of a Sigh, or Tear, or Funeral Lamentation. But our Aſſurance of the future Glory they poſſeſs with Chriſt, (which they themſelves preferr'd to a longer abode on Earth,) ſhould wipe our Eyes, and prevent Exceſs. We mourn that they are gone, and *deſire their Company*; but we know, they do not wiſh themſelves back again for the ſake of *ours*: No, they are gone to better Friends *above*, than thoſe they have left *below*. And were it not for the weakneſs of our Faith and Hope, in reference to the Inviſible World; were it not for the remaining Power of unmortified Selfiſhneſs, and our immoderate Love to this preſent Life; were it not for the remiſneſs of our Love to Chriſt, and the bleſſed Saints; we could not but deſire to be with *them*, rather than wiſh that they ſhould be longer with *us*.

Therefore inſtead of an intemperate Mourning at their departure, let us imitate their Examples, and propound their holy Lives and Deaths, as our Pattern and Encouragement.

§ 1. S*Ince the Honour of* God's Grace *may be very much advanced by our taking notice of the influence and power of it in Believers; Since to praiſe and imitate the holy actions of our* departed Friends, *is almoſt the only* Communion *we can now have with them; and their* Example *though they are dead*, may yet ſpeak *to the Inſtruction and Comfort of the Living; I ſhall conclude with ſome brief account of that* Excellent Perſon, *whoſe deceaſe gave occaſion to our preſent Meeting.*

§. 2. *And knowing the uſual* Flattery *of Funeral Orations, I ſhall paſs over the Advantages of her* Birth, *the Credit of her* Family, *the Sweetneſs of her* Temper, (*the beſt Soil for the Fruits of the Spirit*;) *and the many other natural and acquired* Accompliſhments, *which rendred her* Amiable *to all that knew her; and only mention ſome Paſſages, that may either magnifie the Grace of God, or be proper for our imitation and encouragement. And therein ſhall deliver nothing, but either upon my own knowledge*

*ledge, or from the particular Account I have received from her* neareſt Relations, *and thoſe Reverend* Miniſters, *who aſſiſted with their Prayers, and Counſel during her Sickneſs.*

§ 3. *Thro' the Bleſſing of God on a* Pious Education, *and other means of Grace, and in anſwer to the fervent Prayers of her Holy* Parents, *for the fulfilling of Gods* Covenant Promiſe *to them and to their ſeed; we have great reaſon to believe, that ſhe had choſen the Favour of God as her Felicity and End, almoſt as ſoon as ſhe was capable of making a deliberate choice.*

§ 4. *And a Life of* Seventeen years, *(whereof ſo great a part is loſt by Infancy and Childhood) is certainly very ſhort, for the growth and ripening of ſuch Fruits of the Spirit as ſhe diſcover'd.* A Time and Age, *when Vice and Vanity are wont to bloſſom and ſprout forth in others; When the Thoughts of Death and Judgment are uſually rejected, as unwelcome Intruders before their Time; and ſerious preparation for it deferr'd to a reputed more Convenient Seaſon.*

§ 5. *But before that Age*, her diligent and delightful reading of the Holy Scripture, and valuation of it above other Books, *was very admirable and exemplary. Making the Bread of Life her daily food, and taſting ſuch ſweetneſs, and reaping ſuch benefit by it, that even at* midnight, *while others ſlept, ſhe would often ſpend ſeveral hours in reading the Bible. She lamented on her Death-bed the loſs of Time by other Books; which could not aſſiſt her to a bet-*

*ter underſtanding of her Duty, and the Mind of* God, *nor take off her Affections from the Love of this World, and prepare her Soul for the Heavenly Glory.*

§ 6. *Notwithſtanding this ſecret ſerious Piety, her* Humility *and* Modeſty *was ſuch, as not to make a great noiſe, and ſhow to others, as if the Form of Godlineſs were the principal, or only thing to be regarded.*

§ 7. *For ſeveral weeks* before her laſt Sickneſs, *ſhe was obſerv'd leſs to regard the World than formerly; more Seriouſly to be devoted to God; and more to diſlike vain Company, and idle Talk; eſpecially if it carried with it a tendency and deſign to diſparage others. And in all reſpects ſo to demean her ſelf, as if ſhe had receiv'd ſome ſecret Revelation from God, that her Time would be but ſhort, and her Change was near.*

§ 8. *Though before ſhe fell ſick, ſhe was fearful enough of that* * Diſeaſe, *whereof ſhe dyed, yet having taken her Bed, and knowing the Diſtemper, ſhe profeſs'd her ſelf intirely willing to acquieſce in the Will of* God. *And was diſpleas'd with any, who would have tamper'd with her Face, or diſcours'd to that purpoſe.*

*The ſmall Pox.

§ 9. *Yea, during the whole three weeks of her Sickneſs, ſhe continued in ſuch a frame; notwithſtanding the loathſomneſs of the* Diſeaſe; *notwithſtanding the Troubleſome Preſcriptions of* Phyſicians; *notwithſtanding her own* Pains, *of which her Conſtitution, Breeding, and Age conſidered,* *ſhe could not but be very apprehenſive. And with an* admirable Patience and Reſignation to the Will of God, *with a great contempt of the Vanities of the World, and an holy Indifference even to Life it ſelf, ſhe* deſired to Depart: *And that not meerly to be eas'd of her Pain, but* to be with Chriſt, *and the bleſſed Society above: or to uſe her own words,* To be with her Heavenly, and her Natural Father. *And gave this excellent reaſon for her deſire; Leſt if reſtored to health, ſhe ſhould meet with ſome prevailing* Temptations, *that might turn away her Heart from God and Heaven: And therefore ſhe had rather be with Chriſt, than put it to the venture.*

§ 10. *Her* Victory over this World *was likewiſe evident, by the particular Charge ſhe gave to thoſe about her, to let ſome* young Gentlewomen *of her Acquaintance know from her, how contemptible the beſt of this World will be, when they come to dye: and entreat them in her Name, (as her laſt requeſt, and the expreſſion of her ſpecial kindneſs to their Souls) that they would not overvalue it.*

§ 11. *As an inſtance of her* Submiſſion to the good pleaſure of God, *and ſatisfaction in his order; ſhe deſired, that her* Mother, *and the whole Family, might joyn with her in ſinging the latter part of the 39 Pſalm:* Ver. 9. I was dumb, and opened not my Mouth, becauſe Lord, thou didſt it. When thou with Rebukes doſt correct Man for Iniquity, thou makeſt his beauty to conſume away like a Moth. Surely every man is vanity. *Selah*, &c. *Which ſhe repeated by heart according to the Metre.*

§ 12. *As an inſtance of her joyful* Hope of Glory, *in the preſence of Chriſt after death, ſhe made thoſe who attended in her Sickneſs, frequently to read over the* 1 Theſſ. 4. chap. *in the cloſe whereof, the glorious Appearance of Chriſt to Judgment is ſet forth; and the Happineſs of the Saints deſcrib'd, by* being ever with the Lord; *with this addition,* Wherefore comfort one another with theſe words, *ver.* 17, 18.

§ 13. *With the free uſe* of her Reaſon, *to the very laſt, God was pleas'd to give her the great Bleſſing of a* tender Conſcience; *and therefore ſhe did not ſlightly overlook even* little Failings, *without a penitent Obſervation: and ſome of them ſuch as no man in a Judgment of Charity would reckon ſinful. Every thing that look'd like* undutifulneſs to her Mother, *ſhe heartily begg'd her Pardon for; though nothing conſiderable of that kind can be remembred, to make her need forgiveneſs. Thankfully owning the ſtrictneſs of her Education, and the ſeaſonable Reproofs of a diſcreet Parent; and even the abridgment of that Liberty which other young Perſons take, (very often to their prejudice and ruine) as a ſingular Advantage, and Favour from Heaven.*

§ 14. *In ſome part of her Sickneſs, ſhe had ſome humble becoming* doubts and fears *of her own ſtate; but having imparted them to a Reverend Perſon well acquainted in the Family, and heard*

*heard his Reſolutions and Anſwers; ſhe was better ſatisfied, and expreſs'd her hopes of Pardon and Salvation through the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt;* who loved her, and waſhed her from her Sins in his own Blood. *Yea, ſo far, was ſhe from queſtioning the goodneſs of God, and the Truth of his Promiſe; ſo far from doubting of the Alſufficiency of Chriſt's Mediation, the Merit of his Sacrifice, and his willingneſs to receive returning Sinners: that the believing thoughts of it, were her greateſt ſupport and joy; ſaying often in the time of her Sickneſs, That* though her Sins were as Scarlet, God could make them as Snow: though red like Crimſon, they ſhould be as Wooll, *Iſa.* 1. 18.

§ 15. *Moreover, ſhe did thankfully* acknowledge the Mercies of God *to her, in the former part of her Life: whereof ſhe had very many, both Perſonal and Relative. And particularly deſired, that Thanks might be returned to God for his ſingular Goodneſs to her, during her Sickneſs.*

§ 16. *She was* very deſirous of Prayer to God *on her behalf; and very joyful and well pleaſed when ſhe had it: and being at any time ask't what particular requeſt ſhe deſired ſhould be made to God for her; ſhe mention'd not her Recovery, and the lengthening of her days; but the* forgiveneſs of Sin, *through the Merit of her Redeemer; an humble ſubmiſſion* to *God's diſpoſal; and a prepared heart to acquieſce in his appointment. And ſo in one ſence ſhe was* full of days, *though ſhe died very young: being ſatiated with the Time ſhe had*

*had liv'd on Earth; and not importunate for a longer ſtay.*

§ 17. *Within a few hours before her diſſolution, (of the approach whereof ſhe was more apprehenſive than thoſe about her) ſhe was very deſirous that a* worthy Miniſter *whom ſhe named, might immediately be ſent for, to commend her Soul to God: Who accordingly came, tho' at Midnight. She her ſelf joyn'd in that laſt Office, with great ſeriouſneſs and affection; and afterward return'd him her hearty thanks for his great kindneſs therein, ſaying,* Now I have nothing more to do, but to die: *Only requeſted him not to leave the houſe that night, as knowing, that his* Company *and* Counſel, *might adminiſter to the* ſupport of her Affectionate Mother, *and other Relations, whom ſhe ſhould leave in ſorrow, tho' ſhe her ſelf was paſſing to Eternal Joy.*

*Mr.* S.F.

§ 18. *After which ſhe compos'd her ſelf to reſt, and refuſed every thing that was offer'd her to take, making Signs with her hands of her unwillingneſs to be diſturbed.*

§ 19. *In that ſhort ſpace of her Continuance, which was not an hour, ſhe was heard to ſay,* Be gone, Satan! Be gone! Thou art a Lyar from the Beginning, and the Father of Lyes. O come Lord Jeſus. *And ſoon after ſhe ſaid,* He is come, he is come: *and ſo fell aſleep, as in the Arms of her deareſt Saviour, or as the Jews report of* Moſes, *That he dyed with the Kiſs of God.*

O Death! where is now thy Sting? O Grave! where is now thy Victory? The ſting of Death is Sin, and the ſtrength of Sin is the Law: But thanks be to God, who hath given us the Victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: *And* bleſſed are the Dead that thus dye in the Lord.

§ 20. *Would to God, that the Account here given, might effectually convince us, of the great difference between the Death of the Holy and the Unholy, of the Righteous and the Sinner! Might convince us of the great Bleſſing of* Holy Parents, *and a good Education; and encourage Parents to be diligent and faithful, to be ſerious, prudent, and affectionate, in the Education of their Children; becauſe ſuch a deportment is moſt likely to be owned by God, with the deſired Succeſs.*

*And Oh that it might Convince us likewiſe, of the* Vanity of Youth, *the ſhortneſs of our Lives, the uncertainty of our Time, the nearneſs of our Change, the neceſſity, reaſonableneſs, and manifold advantages of* Remembring our Creator in our younger Years! *And withal might haſten our Preparations, and ſpirit our Deſires, to depart and be diſſolv'd, whenever God ſhall call us!* That following their Example, who by Faith and Patience are gone to inherit the Promiſes, *We may at length meet thoſe precious Souls above, who are gone before us; that with them, and all the Children of the Kingdom, we may* be for ever with the Lord, *which is Beſt of all.*

The End.

# Prepare to Follow.

## Upon the Death of

## Mrs. *ELIZ. GEARING*,

## *July* 2. 1691.

### MATTH. XXIV. 44.

*Therefore be ye alſo ready: for in ſuch an hour as ye think not of, the Son of Man cometh.*

UPON a like Exhortation of our Bleſſed Lord to Watchfulneſs, and Prayer, to Faithfulneſs, and Diligence, in Expectation of his Coming, the Apoſtle *Peter* makes bold to ask the *Queſtion*, whether it concern'd only the Apoſtles, or was ſpoken to all, *Luke* xii.41. The Anſwer whereto doth ſufficiently expreſs the Univerſal Obligation of ſuch a Duty. For our Lord replies, *Bleſſed is that wiſe and faithful Servant, who when his Lord comes, ſhall be found doing his Maſters Work* And yet more expreſly by another Evangeliſt, where the like Parable is apply'd with this addition, *What I ſay unto you, I ſay unto all, Watch*; Mark 13. laſt. which *Watching* is the general Comprehenſive word for being *Ready*. This is the repeated Voice of Chriſt in his Word, wherever he ſpeaks of his Second Coming: This is the diſtinct and loud call of his Providence unto this Congregation by the Death and Funerals of one of our number; you know, I mean our Friend Mrs. *Gearing*, which ſpeaks the ſame Language to all of us, *Be ye alſo ready*. And being deſired on this Occaſion, to preach from theſe words; I ſhall reſerve the mention of ſome things, that were inſtructive and exemplary in the *Deceaſed*, for the cloſe of my Diſcourſe; and in the mean time conſider this ſeaſonable Admonition of our Bleſſed Lord, *Therefore be ye alſo ready; for the Son of Man cometh in ſuch an hour, as ye think not of.*

This and the foregoing Verſes are part of the Anſwer, which our Saviour made to the Diſciples queſtion, in the beginning of the Chapter, v. 3. *Tell us, when ſhall theſe things be*, and *what ſhall be the ſign of thy coming*, and *of the end of the World?* According to the common Apprehenſions which the Jews had of the alteration of the preſent ſtate of things among them, by the coming of the *Meſſiah*; and that general deſtruction of the World, and the State of Eternity which would thereupon follow, they enquire of both together: As reckoning his Coming and the End of the World, would be at once. And throughout this Chapter, we find our Lord's Anſwer to both Queſtions are intermixed; ſome whereof refer to the deſtruction of the Jewiſh State, and his coming to execute Judgment upon that Nation: and others, to the end of the World, whereof the former was but a figure.

It is plain that ſome paſſages refer to the Jewiſh State, ſeveral of the ſigns of his Coming were literally fulfilled, a little before their deſtruction by the *Romans*, as *Joſephus*, and *Tacitus*, and others mention; particularly the 15th and 16th *verſes: When ye therefore ſhall ſee the Abomination of Deſolation, ſpoken of by* Daniel *the Prophet, ſtand in the Holy Place, (whoſo readeth let him underſtand) then let them which be in* Judea, *flee into the Mountains.*

And again *v.* 34. he ſays; *This Generation ſhall not paſs away, till all theſe things be fulfilled.* There is yet no reaſon to confine the whole of this Chapter, to the Calamities which befel the Jewiſh Nation, which was but as a Type and Repreſentation of the general Judgment, preceding the final Doom of the World; for ſome paſſages do as plainly refer to the end of the World. As when he ſpeaks, of his Coming *in the Clouds with power and great glory*, and *of the Angels ſounding the Trumpet*, and *of two Men in the Field*, and *of two Women grinding at the Mill, one taken, and the other left*; referring to the great Diſcrimination of Perſons, that ſhall be made at the end of the World, as when it is ſaid in the 36th *verſe, Of that day and hour no Man knoweth, no not the Angels of Heaven, but my Father only*. And by another Evangeliſt, the Son himſelf is excluded from knowing that hour, *Mark* xiii. 33. But did not Chriſt know the time of the Deſtruction of the Jews, their Temple, City, and Nation? when he himſelf foretels the time, when it ſhould be? And therefore thoſe words in the 35th *verſe, Heaven and Earth ſhall paſs away, but my words ſhall not paſs away*, ſeem to be a tranſition from anſwering the firſt Queſtion, concerning the Deſtruction of the Jews, to anſwer the other queſtion, about the End of the World: whereupon follows the Exhortation in the 42*d verſe, Watch, for you know not what hour your Lord will come. But know this*, (or *you do know this*) as the Original word will bear, and may better be rendred;) You do know this, *That if the good man of the houſe had known, in what Watch of the night the Thief would come, he would have watched, and not ſuffered his houſe to be broken up: Therefore be ye alſo Ready, for the Son of Man cometh in an hour that you think not of*.

I hope none will be ſo weak, as to be ſtumbled at the Compariſon in this paſſage of the Coming of Chriſt unto that of a *Thief*, becauſe the alluſion is only as to the *unexpectedneſs* of the time, and ſeaſon of his coming. It is a compariſon, or alluſion, as one ſays, *Non perſonæ ad perſonam, non negotij ad negotium, ſed temporis ad tempus.* q. d. The Parallel does not hold between Perſon and Perſon, between Buſineſs and Buſineſs, but only between the Time of the ones coming, and that of the other (*viz.*) The Suddenneſs and Unexpectedneſs of it. In which ſence the Apoſtle mentions the coming of Chriſt, as of a *Thief in the Night*, at a Time when he is not expected, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 2. 2 *Pet.* 3. 10. *Therefore be ye alſo ready*, for He comes in a time when you think not of it. His laſt Coming, at the end of the World will be ſurpriſing; and ſo is his other Coming to ſummon us out of the World by *Death*, which will tranſmit us over to his final Judgment. For nothing can be done to make us Ready, and prepared to meet him as our Judge, but on this ſide the Grave. Our readineſs therefore for Death, and for the Coming of our Lord to Judgment, is all one.

In the words we have three parts. 1. The Certainty of Chriſt's Coming again ſuppoſed. 2. The Suddenneſs and Unexpectedneſs of it aſſerted, it will be in an *Hour that you think not of*. 3. The Neceſſity and Obligation that reſults from thence, of endeavouring to be Ready. Accordingly I ſhall, I. Explain the Nature of this *Readineſs*, for the Coming of Chriſt. II. Show the force of the *Argument*, in ſeveral Conſiderations, from the ſuddenneſs and expectedneſs of his Coming, and our uncertainty of the time thereof, therefore to be *Ready*. III. Shall aſſiſt you to make the *Application*.

1. The Certainty of his ſecond Coming is ſuppoſed: *The Son of Man cometh in an hour you think not of.* It ſuppoſeth then that he will come again. *The Son of Man* is a Title very often given to Chriſt, and aſſumed by himſelf, particularly with relation to the Final Judgment; for we read, that the Father *hath committed all Judgment to the Son, and given him Authority to execute Judgment, as the Son of Man,* (or *becauſe he is the Son of Man*) and it follows, *For the hour ſhall come, that all they who are in their Graves ſhall hear his Voice, and ſhall come out of their Graves, they that have done good to the Reſurrection of Life, and they that have done evil to the Reſurrection of Damnation,* John 5. 27,28. And with particular relation to this, he himſelf ſpeaks, *Matth.* 25. 31. *When the* Son of Man *ſhall come in his glory, and all the Holy Angels with him, then ſhall he ſit upon the Throne of his Glory.* And when the High Prieſt adjured him, to tell whether he were *indeed the Chriſt, the Son of God,* Matth. 26. 63, 64. obſerve what he anſwer'd, *Hereafter ſhall you ſee* the Son of Man, *ſitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the Clouds of Heaven.* Some would have it an Inſtance

of his Humility to aſſume this Title, as referring to the meanneſs of his preſent condition in the World; but that does not ſeem to reach the ſence of the Expreſſion, *For all Judgment is committed to him, becauſe he is the Son of Man*, or becauſe He is *Mediator*; becauſe He is the true *Seed of the Woman*; promiſed *to bruiſe the Serpents head*; The true Son of Man, to whom *Dominion* and *Glory*, and a *Kingdom* was given by the *Ancient of Days*, Dan. 7. 13, 14. So that this Title is a Name of Office. All Supremacy, Authority and Power that belongs to the Office of *Mediator*, is given to him: And the Gentiles, as well as the Seed of *Abraham*, may by him be juſtified, and obtain everlaſting Life. The Jews would appropriate the *Meſſiah* to themſelves, as *the Son of David*, and the King of *Iſrael*, forgetting that he is *the Son of Man*, promis'd from the beginning, to be *the Deſire of all Nations*, and the Hope of all the Ends of the Earth; to redeem us unto God, out of all Nations, Tongues, Kindreds, and People.

The coming again of this *Son of Man* is here ſuppoſed. He came once as the promiſed Redeemer, to be incarnate in our Nature, and to offer himſelf a willing Sacrifice for the Expiation of Sin: But he is to come again as the Judge of Quick and Dead; even this ſame Jeſus who after his Reſurrection converſed forty days upon Earth, and then aſcended in Triumph and Glory to Heaven; *This ſame Jeſus,* ſaid the Angels to the two Witneſſes of his Aſcenſion, *who is taken up into heaven, ſhall ſo come again as you have ſeen him go into it,* Acts 1.11. This was propheſied by *Enoch* the ſeventh from *Adam, Jude* 14. This was foretold, and prefigur'd variouſly in the Old Teſtament; this was expreſly promiſed by our Lord, in the days of his Fleſh; eſpecially for the encouragement of his Diſciples, when he was about to leave them, and ſpeaks of his departure. This is inſiſted upon by the Apoſtles, in their ſeveral Epiſtles, as a Motive to Humility, to Patience, to Perſeverance, notwithſtanding the many difficulties, and diſcouragements, which they met with for their Fidelity to Chriſt, and the Goſpel.

But I need not inſiſt on the proof of this, among thoſe who own it is a fundamental Article of their Creed; That he who dyed on the Croſs, and roſe again, tho' he now ſits at the right Hand of God, and the Heavens ſhall contain him 'till the Reſtitution of all things, yet *He ſhall come again to judge the World,* and determine the final Everlaſting State of all Mankind. But becauſe he is not yet come, Men are ready to conclude he never will; becauſe things continue as they were, one Generation paſſing, and another coming; Men that walk after their own Luſts, (whoſe intereſt it is to have it true, that he ſhall not come,) are ready to cry out in ſcorn, *Where is the Promiſe of his Coming*? 2 Pet. 3. 3, 4. But for us to be ignorant that he will come again, muſt be a wilful, willing, choſen Ignorance: Becauſe the *Lord is not ſlack*, as Men count *ſlackneſs*; but *a thouſand years are to him as one day*: It is not Slackneſs, but Long-ſuffering, which ſhould lead Men to Repentance, and to Prepare for his Coming: And ſo would be *Salvation*. For ſo it is called, from the Tendency of it, *ver.* 15. And if it be not ſo to us, it is our own fault.

So unqueſtionably *Certain* is this Appearance, and Second Coming of Chriſt, that the Apoſtle *Paul* adjures *Timothy*, in the moſt ſolemn and affecting manner, to the faithful diſcharge of his Duty, by that Conſideration, *I charge thee before God, and before the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall judge the quick and dead at his Appearance, and his Kingdom*: or when he ſhall appear in his Kingdom, 2 *Tim.* 4. 1.

The *Jews* knew and granted, that the *Meſſiah* was to come as a Judge, by the Traditional Prophecy of *Enoch*, which began with thoſe words, *The Lord ſhall come.* This they underſtood long before the Incarnation of our Saviour: So that they were wont to begin their Writs, or Inſtruments of the *Greateſt Excommunication*, with thoſe words of the Prophecy of *Enoch*, *The Lord ſhall come.* As if, beſides all other Puniſhments, they Bound over the Excommunicated Perſon to the laſt great Aſſize, to be Judged by the *Meſſias.* And the Apoſtle ſeems to allude to this, 1 *Cor.* 16. 22. *If any Man love not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be Anathema Maranatha*: *i. e.* Accurſed with that great and terrible Excommunication, *The Lord ſhall come.* For ſo they call it from the firſt words, as we often give Names to *Writs*, and other Inſtruments, by reciting the firſt words of them: *He ſhall come again: he ſhall be revealed from Heaven, in flaming fire, with his mighty Angels, to render vengeance to them which know not God, and obey not the Goſpel,* &c. 2 Theſſ. 1. 7, 9. *We ſhall all be made to ſtand before his Judgment-Seat*, 2 Cor. 5. 10, 14. Rom. 14 10. *And every one ſhall then give an account of himſelf to God, and receive according to what he hath done in the body, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* He is delegated and appointed by God for this Work, and every way fitted and qualified to undertake it, *Acts* 17. 31.

II. The *Suddenneſs* and *Unexpectedneſs* of his Coming again: *The hour of it no Man knows, no, not the Angels of God in Heaven.* It will ſurprize Mankind, as the Deluge did the Old World in the days of *Noah.* The *time* of it is lock'd up in the Treaſuries of Heaven, and we have no Key that will open it. Neither the Time of Chriſt's coming to

Judge the World, or the time of his calling us by Death to come to him, is certainly known. *Behold! I know not the day of my death*, we may every one ſay with *Iſaac*, Gen. 27. 2. The knowledge of this Time and Seaſon he hath reſerved in his own power; it belongs not to us, it is no part of our Priviledge to know it, *Acts* 1. 7.

If it had been fit and becoming, adviſeable and expedient, for us to underſtand it; if it had been for our Advantage, to know the preciſe time of our own Death, or of the Final Judgment; if it would have added any whit to our Spiritual Stature, and Growth in Grace; if it would not have much better promoted our Watchfulneſs, and ſerious Diligence, and forwarded our Preparations, to have remained Ignorant, he would not have drawn ſuch a Veil over *that Day* and *Hour:* But would have left it written in fair Characters. But God every way conſulted our Intereſt, and the general Good of the World, by hiding this Knowledge from us. God's Government of the World and the Magiſtrates Influence under God for the Good of Men, would very much be weakned, if every Man did certainly know beforehand the time of his Death. Our Uſefulneſs to others would be very much check'd, and the neceſſary Preparation for being ſo, if we knew we ſhould not out-live ſuch a Year, or ſuch a Stage of our Lives. Our Joys and

Sorrows, with reſpect to our Relations and Friends, would then be immoderate; our Carriage, in Proſperity and Adverſity, would be more unbecoming, our Dependance upon God and his Providence, the Redemption of our Time, the Contempt of this World, and the Preparation for another, would all be very much hindred by the certain knowledge of the time of Chriſt's Coming to call us to Judgment. Therefore he tells us, *That in an hour we think not of, the Son of Man cometh.* It ſhall be ſuddenly, when he is not expected; and therefore *All* ſhould be *Ready.*

It is ſometimes repreſented by the *Travailing Pangs* of a Woman with Child, which may overtake her at a diſtance from her own Houſe, when ſhe looks not for it, 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 3. 'Tis ſet forth by the Surprize of a Thief entring the Window of a Houſe by Night, when the good Man of the Houſe little expected him, *Rev.* 16. 15. *Behold, I come as a Thief; bleſſed is he that watcheth.* And again we are told, *As a Snare, ſhall it come upon all that dwell upon the face of the earth,* Luke 21. 35. When Men are careleſs, and ſecure, and confident of long Life; when they are buſie in purſuit of great things for themſelves in this World, when they are big with mighty Projects and Deſigns for hereafter, when they enlarge their Imaginations to contrive the Satisfactions, they ſhall have for many years to come, in the Pleaſures, and Dignities, and Wealth, which they count upon before hand: when they ſay in their Hearts, *Our Lord delays his Coming*; I have yet time enough to get ready; Then ſhall this day overtake them, *when they think not of it: The Lord of that Servant will come in a day that he looked not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware*, Luke 12. 46.

III. The *Neceſſity*, and Obligation of being *Ready*, becauſe of the Certainty and Suddenneſs of the Coming of Chriſt. Where I ſhall, *Firſt*, Conſider the *Nature* of this *Readineſs*, and Explain ſomething of it. *Secondly*, Shew the Force of the *Argument*, and amplifie it in ſeveral Conſiderations, to urge it the more effectually upon All to make *Ready*.

I. What is the *Nature* of this *Readineſs*? In the general, it is expreſſed by Two or Three Evangeliſts, under the term of *Watching*: Which, as the ſummary Preparation for the Coming of Chriſt, takes in all the Duties of a Chriſtian, with reſpect to the Affairs of his Soul, and the Everlaſting World; as awaking out of Security, foreſeeing our Danger, providing againſt it, carrying it ſuitable to the Expectation of the Appearance of Chriſt from Heaven; Looking for, Waiting for, Praying for, Haſtning to, or *haſtning of*, the Coming of the Day of God: It comprehends an awaken'd Heart, an active Faith, a lively Hope, a diffuſive Charity, and perſevering Diligence in all the Fruits of Righteouſneſs; That we may perfect Holineſs in the Fear of God, lay up a good Foundation againſt the time to come, and at laſt lay hold of Eternal Life: That we may have Confidence at Chriſt's Appearance, and be able to ſtand before the Son of Man, with exceeding Joy. This in general under the Name of *Watching*, and being *Ready*, is the Duty of all.

2. Beſides this General Account, we may conſider ſome of the *Particular Metaphors*, under which our Lord repreſents himſelf, (or is ſet forth in Scripture,) when he comes again.

*Firſt*, As a *Bridegroom*. And ſo our Readineſs conſiſts, in our Accepting him, and Chooſing him in ſuch a Relation: *I have eſpouſed you to one Husband, even Chriſt*, 2 Cor. 11. 7. And we read of the *Marriage of the Lamb*, and the *Readineſs* of the Wife, cloathed in *fine Linnen*, which is the *Righteouſneſs of the Saints*, Rev. 19. 8, 9.

Now if you think you are ready for the Coming of Chriſt, under this Notion, ask your ſelves, Hath there been any ſuch Agreement between Chriſt and your Souls, which the Scripture repreſents by a *Marriage Covenant*? Have you penitently and thankfully Accepted him for *Yours*? and given up your ſelves entirely to be his? To as many as have thus Accepted and Received him, He gives Power and Priviledge to become the Sons of God. Do you renounce all other Lovers? Do you prefer Him alone, abandoning all Competitors and Rivals? ſo as *not to be for another*, but *for him*, Hoſ. 3. 3: The like we read, *Pſal.* 45. 10, 11. *Hearken, O Daughter, and conſider, and encline thine ear; forget alſo thine own people, and thy Father's houſe. So ſhall the King greatly deſire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord, and worſhip thou him.* Is there a Supreme, Superlative, Correſpondent *Affection*, on your part to him, who hath ſaid, That as *a Bridegroom rejoyceth over a Bride*, ſo will *He rejoyce over Thee*? Iſa. 62. 5. Is this expreſs'd, by an entire Subjection to him, as the Head of his Church, and the Saviour of his Body? *Eph.* 3. 23. And this not for a time only, but for ever, *Hoſ.* 2. 19. *And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteouſneſs, and in judgment, and in loving kindneſs, and in mercies.*

The Publick Solemnity of this Marriage, will be at the Reſurrection of the Dead, when he ſhall come again to conduct his Spouſe to his Father's Houſe; and more fully to evidence his Love, by the Manifeſtation of his own Glory. Our *Readineſs* therefore for the Coming of Chriſt, implies our hearty Choice of *him*, and Conſent to be *his*; to Love, Serve, Honour, and Obey him with Faithfulneſs, Diligence, and Perſeverance to the end.

*Secondly*, Chriſt is repreſented as a *Houſholder*, and *Lord*; who is gone into a far Country, and hath intruſted his Servants with various Talents, which they are to employ according to his Order, and trade with for his Service, expecting to be accountable to him at his Return, *Luke* 19. 23. Though our Lord be gone to Heaven, he hath left a Family upon Earth, and committed a *Truſt* to every of his Servants. Now our Fidelity and Care in the Improvement and Uſe of our Talents, will be our *Readineſs* for the Coming of Chriſt. Under theſe Conſiderations we are to be Reſponſible to him, for all the Bleſſings, Natural or Spiritual, that he hath committed to our Truſt, and we have no Right in them any other way: We are but Stewards, He is the *Proprietor*, and Abſolute Lord. And according to the number and kind of our Talents, he expects proportionable Care and Diligence, as good Stewards to manage and improve them. *For to whom much is given, of them much will be required.* Every one hath ſome Talents, ſome Truſt; our Reaſon, and our

Health, our Time, our Parts, Reputation, Eſtate, Intereſt, Authority, Power: All the Bleſſings of any kind that we have, are *Talents*, to be uſed for the Service of our Lord: And *Bleſſed is that wiſe and faithful Servant, who at his Lords Coming ſhall be found to have done ſo.* Our Faithfulneſs and Care herein, is our *Readineſs for his Coming.* For he may demand an Account of our Stewardſhip, when we expect it not, *Luke* 16. 2. Therefore if we would be Ready, we muſt be Diligent in his Work, and not bury our *Talents in a Napkin*, or waſte our Lords Goods; but be found faithfully doing his Buſineſs in the Places and Relations he hath ſet us. In this conſiſts that *Readineſs for his Coming*, that will intitle us to the Bleſſing, *Luke* 12. 43.

But leſt it ſhould be ſaid, Who can come up to this? Who is able to be always thus diligently employed? Who then can be *Ready*? Let us therefore,

*Thirdly*, *Diſtinguiſh* concerning this *Readineſs.* There is an *Habitual Readineſs*, and *Actual*: The one of our *State*, and the other of our *Frame*.

I. An *Habitual Readineſs*, which concerns our State: When our Peace is made with God, ſo that we ſhall be *found of him in peace*, at the Coming of Chriſt, 2 *Pet.* 3. 14.

When we have ſo put on the Lord Jeſus, as at the Great Day we ſhall not be found *naked*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 3. When we are intereſted in the atoning Sacrifice of Chriſt, ſo as to be reconciled to God, and ſhall find Mercy of the Lord in the Great Day, *Rev.* 3. 17. Perſons of this Character, will manifeſt in their Courſe and Carriage, that they expect the Coming of Chriſt, by walking in all holy Converſation and Godlineſs, 2 *Pet.* 3. 10. *Denying all Ungodlineſs, and worldly Luſts; they will live Soberly, Righteouſly, and Godly in this World, as thoſe that look for the bleſſed Hope, and glorious Appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*, Tit. 1. 12, 13.

But becauſe all that are Ready as to their *State*, and as to their general Courſe, are not ſo as to their *Frame*, therefore Conſider,

2. There is an *Actual Readineſs*, as to the Diſpoſition of the Heart; which upon the near Proſpect and Approach of any Meſſenger of Chriſt, to call us out of the World, is a Chriſtian Duty. This *Actual Readineſs* we ſhould all endeavour after: That we may have greater degrees of that Readineſs of Mind, and Preparedneſs of Spirit, to Obey the Summons and Call of Chriſt, tho' it ſhould be with very little Warning: Being Prepar'd, and Willing to go to him whenſoever he ſhall call. *I am ready* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *to be bound at* Jeruſalem; *yea*,

*to die there for the Name of Chriſt*, Acts 21. 13.

All holy Perſons (though *Habitually* ready) do not reach this, Some cry out with *David, Lord remove thy ſtroke from me! ſpare me a little longer!* Pſal. 39. Or as *Hezekiah*, when he received the Meſſage of Death, *turn'd his face to the wall, and wept*, Iſa. 38. But if we have Warning of the Approach of Death, we ought to ſtir up our ſelves *actually* to Prepare, to trim our Lamps, and ſet our Souls in Order, reviewing our Lives, renewing our Repentance, exerciſing our Graces, exciting our Hopes, recollecting our paſt Experiences, getting our Evidences ready, and the Promiſes on which we may venture our Souls in a dying Hour; that we may ſay with old *Simeon, Now let thy Servant depart in peace:* And with the Apoſtle *Paul, I have finiſh'd my courſe, henceforth a Crown of Righteouſneſs is laid up for me:* And with our Lord himſelf, *Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit:* Or with Holy *Stephen, Lord Jeſus receive it.*

*Chriſtians!* Are we not too Unready, the beſt of us, as to Frame and Actual Preparation? Do we ſit as looſe from this World, and all the Perſonal and Relative Comforts of it, that accommodate the bodily Life, as we ſhould? Have we conquer'd the Fears of Death, and familiarized the Thoughts of the Grave, to that degree as we ought? Is our Love to Chriſt ſo ſprightly and vigorous, that we could heartily welcome any Meſſenger to call us to him? Be the Inſtrument what it will, and the Manner and Circumſtances of our Departure as God ſhall pleaſe, and the Warning never ſo ſhort and ſudden? Are we ready to go preſently, at the firſt Call? That were it not for doing Service in our Places, (which God, who needs not our Help, can do by other ways,) we ſhould rather chuſe *to be with Chriſt, as far better.* Could we Anſwer to ſuch a Call of God, as *Samuel, Lord, here I am, thou didſt call me?* O let me paſs through the dark Valley! O that nothing may keep me longer at ſuch an uncomfortable diſtance from my Lord and Saviour! *that where he is, I may be, to behold his Glory.* This *Readineſs,* Habitual and Actual, we have need to look after; becauſe *the Son of Man comes in a time when we think not of him.* And therefore,

II. To urge your Diligence and Care to be *Ready* for the Coming of Chriſt, let me amplifie, and enforce the Argument in this Text, by ſeveral Conſiderations. As,

I. That *whether Ready, or not Ready, e're long our Lord will come.* Our particular Judgment by Death, which ſhall confine us to the Eternal and Final one, is at no great diſtance. We are haſtning to this Day of God, whether we believe, and mind it, or no: As Paſſengers in a Ship, to the end of their Voyage, whether they ſleep or wake: whether we be wiſe Servants, or fooliſh; faithful Stewards, or unfaithful; whether we expect the Coming of our Lord, and Prepare for it, or do not: *He will ſhortly come*, and call us to an Account. O how ſoon ſhall you and I be gone! What a Change will a few days make in this City, and in this Congregation? We may judge of it, by what it hath made in few years paſt? In leſs than Twenty Years, what Changes in Families, and Churches, and Cities, and Nations? Husbands and Wives parted, Parents and Children: Friends ſnatch'd away out of the Boſom of their Friends: Thoſe we loved, and lived familiarly with us, Called before us, and gone home: And we are haſtning after apace, whether our Readineſs and Preparation do, or do not, anſwerably haſten. One Relation, and another Acquaintance drops into the Grave. Some are ready, and ſome unready. One Paſtor after another is removed to Heaven, and the Pulpits where they preach know them no more. And others will ſtart up in our rooms, and are preparing to fill our Places, who ſucceed any of thoſe, whoſe Funerals you Remember. And after a few *Lord's Days* more, and at moſt after a few Summers

and

and Winters more, you and I ſhall be called likewiſe, whether we be Ready, or not Ready.

2. *When once thou art called to thy particular Judgment by Death, nothing more can be done to get Ready for the Coming of Chriſt,* Eccl. 9. 10. John 9. 4. What, if you were now leaving this World? (And how near and ſure is ſuch an hour!) You would then be ſenſible, that *now* or *never* is the time to prepare, and get Ready. Awake therefore, and Mind it without delay, that you may not cry for more Time, when time is gone; and for the Mercy of God, when it is too late. O how ſhall my unprepared Soul Appear before my God! How ſhall I paſs into Eternity unready! What ſhall I do, to meet my Lord with Comfort! as if you had never heard till that time, that you muſt die, and come to Judgment. O what Hearts of ſtone have Sinners, that can hear theſe things ſo often, and not reſolve without delay to get Ready! That will not conſider the Judge is at the Door, his Vengeance at their back, that his Wrath purſues their ſins, and woe be to them if it overtake them. Before their Friends have laid their Bodies in their Graves, or wrapp'd them in their Burying Cloaths, their Souls ſhall feel, that God is in earneſt, and that *now* is the only time to get ready for Judgment.

3. *When Men think not of it, and leaſt expect his Summons, the Lord doth often come.* When thou art moſt regardleſs of Death, thy Head and Heart taken up with other things, the Hand-writing on the Wall may appear, and ſtrike thee into a fit of Trembling. A Voice from God may be heard, *Come away*, Man, or Woman! *Come away*, thy Time ſhall be no more; this Evening, or the next Morning, this Night, or the next Day, thy Soul ſhall be required of thee. Believe it, no Place, no Age, no Time, no Portion of thy Life, is certainly exempted. Do not then put off thy being Ready, leſt thy Reſolutions for hereafter, ſhould bear longer date than the time of thy Life.

4. *All the Time of our Lives is little enough, to get Ready for the Coming of Chriſt.* 'Tis little enough to learn to live, ſays the Moraliſt: It is ſhort enough be ſure to learn to Dye. Ask thoſe who have taken moſt Pains, and ſpent moſt of their Time to get Ready: Yet after all their Prayers, and Tears, after all their Watching, Striving, Running, and Preparedneſs, they complain they are *Unready* ſtill: Unready for the Spiritual Coming of Chriſt, when they are to meet him at his Table; much more *Unready* for his laſt Coming. Therefore *let us give Diligence, that we may be found of him in Peace, without ſpot, and blameleſs.*

And if the queſtion be ſeriouſly ask'd of all of you, one after another, Are you prepared for Death? are you Ready for the Coming of Chriſt? or are you not? How few will have the Heart, or Face, to ſay *they are*? The beſt will ſay, they need further Preparation: But what muſt they think, and ſay of themſelves, who own they are habitually, as to their State unready; no way fit to Dye. I cannot ſay my Peace is made with God: I have not yet enter'd into Covenant with him: I have not ſubjected and yielded my ſelf to Chriſt: I have not taken on his Yoke, or I have caſt it off, after I took it on: I am yet a Stranger to him; or I have ſhamefully left him after ſome Acquaintance? And will you put it any longer to the venture, when your Lord may call within an hour?

5. *God is now ready to Aſſiſt you by his Grace, if you will awake, and mind your Work; but if you delay, he may juſtly refuſe, and withdraw it.* And if once the Caſe comes to that, you can no more make Ready for Death and Judgment, than if you were already dead. It being as poſſible for us to Repent without life, or after we are dead, as to Repent without God's Grace, while we are living. Therefore they that promiſe for themſelves, that they ſhall Repent, and Prepare for the Coming of Chriſt, (ſome time

hereafter they reſolve they will,) they muſt not only promiſe for themſelves, but for God too. That he will wait their leiſure, and dance attendance after them, through all the Stages of their Delays; and yet be as ready to aſſiſt them hereafter as now; otherwiſe it is as uncertain, whether you ſhall *Repent hereafter* if you live, as whether you ſhall *live* to that hereafter, wherein you ſay you intend to Repent.

6. Conſider, *How great and Important a thing it is to Dye, and to meet the Lord our Judge.* It is ſo even for good Men that are *habitually Ready*, after ſuch a Life of Senſe, and the deep Impreſſions we are under by ſenſible Objects; and after our many Backſlidings, and actual Sins. To look into the Houſe of Darkneſs, and think of lodging there; to lay down theſe Bodies, to corrupt and putrifie there; to bid adieu to all our Relations, and take a ſolemn leave of all our Friends; to think of paſſing thro' this dark Entry, (through which as we go right or wrong, we are made or undone, for ever;) to think of the Majeſty, and Holineſs of God, his Truth, and Juſtice; to conſider the ſtrictneſs, and Spirituality of his Holy Law, and the awful Solemnity of the Tryal and Judgment, that all Mankind muſt come under: Theſe and ſuch things conſider'd

der'd, which are obvious to any conſidering Man, make it no eaſie matter *to dye*, even for the beſt. But for an unprepared Soul, that is Unready as to his State, who hath done little or nothing, ever in his whole Life of ſuch Work; no Expreſſions can deſcribe the Terrors of that Man's Caſe. Eſpecially for careleſs, carnal Profeſſors, that attend the preaching of the Word, and are deceived by the Devil, to think they are in the way to Heaven, while yet they live in Secret Sin, and are Enemies to God; what killing diſappointment will they meet with, one moment after Death? when they expect with the fooliſh Virgins, to enter Heaven, and find the Door to be ſhut.

Sirs, believe and tremble! If you are not ready for the Coming of Chriſt, you are ready for his condemning Sentence, and ripe for Ruine. If you are not ready, as Veſſels of Mercy prepared for Glory, you are ready, as Veſſels of Wrath, fitted for Deſtruction. That Place and Portion which you are fit for, you ſhall have at Death. If you are not fit to be with Chriſt, if you are *not made meet for the Inheritance of the Saints in Life*, if you are not formed, and wrought by the Spirit of Chriſt, for this ſelf-ſame thing, you ſhall have another Place, and Company, and Portion, with the Devil and his Angels, in un-

unquenchable Fire, where is weeping and wailing, and gnaſhing of Teeth for ever.

7. *You need not fear that you ſhall haſten your Death, by Thinking of it, and being Ready.* Chriſt's Summons will not be haſten'd, tho' thy Preparation be. The ſtroke of Death will not be ſooner, but the eaſier, and make Life, and Death it ſelf ſweeter, by now endeavouring to be Ready. You will not then be afraid of every Sickneſs, and threatning Danger, that brings you to the Borders of the Grave. They were the *fooliſh Virgins*, who were affrighted at the Midnight cry, *The Bridegroom cometh*, becauſe their Lamps were out, and they had no Oyl; they were ſtruck to the Heart, their Hopes dyed, and they preſently ſunk into Deſpair. But of ſuch as are Ready, we find them ſpeak of Dying, as of an eaſie ſleep. *I muſt put off this Earthly Tabernacle ſhortly*, ſaith one Apoſtle; *The time of my Departure is at hand*, and *I am ready to be offer'd up*, ſaith another, 2 *Pet.* 1. 14. 2 *Tim.* 4. 6. But as Chriſt will not delay his Coming, tho' thou be unprepared, ſo neither is thy Readineſs for Death, a likely means to ſhorten thy Life.

8. Conſider, *It is for this end, that our Lives are continued, and all the Mercies of our Lives, that we may be Ready.* What have you Life given you for? why were not you

cut off many years ago? but that you might have Time and Space to Repent, and Prepare for the Coming of Chriſt? How many years have ſome of you been ſpared? It may be twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years? And yet after all you *are not ready*. What have you been buſie about all this while? How have you employ'd your Time? What is the end of God, do you think, in all the merciful helps, He continues you? Such as Miniſters, and Books, Ordinances and Providences, your own Sickneſs, and others Funerals? You loſe the benefit, and uſe of all your Mercies of Life, Health, and Time, and ſome of you of Wealth and Honour, *&c.* of all the Sermons you have heard, of all the Providential Warnings of God to Awaken you: you have loſt them all, if they have not furthered your Readineſs, for the Coming of Chriſt. And if you ſhall live many years to come, you muſt ſay it was all *loſt Time*: And wiſh you had never had an hour of it, while this preparation for Death and Judgment is neglected.

9. Conſider *the unſpeakable Difference between a prepared and unprepared Soul, in a dying Hour*. The one is going to ſee the things he hath Believed, and poſſeſs that which he hoped for, and hath the promiſe of God, that he ſhall enjoy. The other

is going to feel, what he would not in time believe; to endure the threatned Wrath, he would not Fear, ſo as to Eſcape. The one is come to the end of all his Prayers, and Patience, Labours, and Sufferings: The other, to the end of all his Eaſe, and Pleaſure, Mirth and Joy. The one hath the promiſed Felicity, with God, and Chriſt, and all the bleſſed Spirits above, in view before him. The other hath Death and Hell, the Judgment of Chriſt, and an Eternity of Miſery before him, ready to overwhelm his Soul. The one can look back with Comfort, and reflect upon his upright Holy perſevering Obedience, mixt with Repentance for many Sins and Failings, and yet can hope in God for his Acceptance thro' Chriſt; the other muſt review his Heart and Life with horrour and regret, and read over the black *Items* of his careleſs Impenitent Courſe, with Bitterneſs and Torment, and the Fears of greater. The one is leaving this World, where he ſpent his days in preparing for Eternity, (tho' he heartily laments, that he began no ſooner, and minded it no more;) The other is paſſing into the inviſible Eternal World, for which he hath made no proviſion. The one by Death, ſhall be tranſlated to a bleſſed State of Holineſs, Love, and Peace, in the everlaſting joyful Praiſes of God, his Maker, Redeemer, and Sanctifier; The other

ther ſort are paſſing into the Regions of Darkneſs and Deſpair, among Devils, and unholy miſerable Souls, with whom they muſt dwell, under the Hatred and Curſe of God; and the unſpeakable Terrours of his Wrath for ever. O the difference between one that is *ready*, and one that is *unready!* when the Summons from Chriſt ſhall come to call them *both* away. Conſider this, and endeavour to be Ready; for the difference between one man's Death and anothers, depends on the difference between Heart and Heart, Life and Life, Preparation and Unpreparedneſs.

10. *Conſider, that all the Readineſs you now can get, will be little enough to ſupport your Souls, when Chriſt ſhall call.* Our utmoſt Diligence to Prepare will not be too much, to enable us chearfully to commend our Souls into the Hands of Chriſt, in Expectation of all the great and glorious things, which he hath Purchaſed, Revealed, and Promiſed. Then all the Grace you have treaſured up, will be little enough; for that is a time to uſe it, not to get it. Our ſtrongeſt Faith will hardly be ſufficient; the cleareſt Evidences of our Acceptance with God, will be no more than needs; the moſt appropriating, particular, applicatory Faith, (ſaying, *I know that my Redeemer liveth,*) will be little enough to give us confidence in a dying

ing Hour. You know of none can help you, if then you cannot look to Chriſt with Hope. If the Devil ſay, this ſinful Soul is mine, and Chriſt diſown thee, and ſay ſo too, what ſhall overcome the Fears of Death? No wonder if Doubts and Fears ariſe, from the weakneſs of our Grace, our Negligence and Remiſneſs in the Service of God, our Folly and Offences, and manifold Backſlidings, our familiarity with this World, and natural Love of Life, no wonder if it be difficult to conquer all theſe. And how can that be done, if we be not now diligent to get Ready?

11. Conſider for your Encouragement, that *Uprightneſs and Sincerity ſhall be accepted, as your habitual Readineſs.* We are under a merciful Covenant, and ſerve a gracious Redeemer. We find by the Parable of the wiſe and fooliſh Virgins, that tho' the former, who had Oyl in their Veſſels, had many faults; (for they ſlumber'd as well as the Fooliſh, when they ſhould have been actually Waking, and Watching,) yet they were not ſhut out of Heaven. And there your Conformity to Chriſt ſhall be compleat, and your weak imperfect Graces ſhall be perfected.

12. Remember this alſo, That *if your diligent Preparation be a difficult Work, it is but*

*for a little while.* The allotted Seaſon to Watch, and Work, and Wreſtle, to ſtrive and run, and uſe all Diligence to be Ready, is not long. And Chriſt may ſay, *Will you not watch with me one hour? that you may lift up your heads with Joy at my appearing, and then dwell with me for ever?* O how ſoon will the labour of Repentance, and humble Self-denying Diligence, in our preparatory Work be all over!

Soon will all the Affairs of Humane Life be over; all theſe little things which Men call *Buſineſs*, be paſt and gone; thoſe, I mean, of Trade and Money, of Farms and Merchandize, they will all be over e're it be long: So will the Difficulties and Trouble of holy ſerious Diligence, in making ready for the Coming of Chriſt be over too. Now we muſt Fight and Wreſtle and hold on unto Victory, but the time of Triumph is approaching. Now we muſt watch, and ſtand upon our guard, but the promiſed everlaſting Reward, and Reſt, is not far off: Now our Life is, or ſhould be, a Life of Prayer, e're long we ſhall receive the full Anſwer of all our Prayers, and all our Enemies be under our Feet; never to Diſturb, or Tempt, or Diſquiet, or Indanger us more for ever. It all depends upon our ſincere and perſevering Diligence, to get ready for the Coming of Chriſt.

The Improvement, which may be made of this, ſhall be, *Firſt*, To Lament our great and manifeſt unpreparedneſs for this Coming of Chriſt.

1. *Many ſuch as are truly ſanctified, and have Oyl in their Veſſels, are yet too Unready,* for want of frequent believing Conſideration, concerning *this Coming of Chriſt,* and for want of *Actual Preparation* for it. How many are intangled with the Cares, and Hurry of worldly Affairs, to that degree, that they do not take Time enough, to retire and bethink themſelves of the glorious Appearance, and Revelation of Chriſt from Heaven, and ſo their Faith is weak, and their Preparations ſlow. Alas! we are but *too unready,* our unmortified Affections to Earthly Things, and unbecoming Fears of our laſt Enemy, do plainly prove it. The many Breaches between God and our Souls, by particular Backſlidings, tell us we are *Unready.* The Vanity of our Minds and Spirits, diſcovered by an undue Conformity to this World, ſhows that we are *Unready.* The exceſs of our Paſſions, upon Worldly Loſſes and Diſappointments, atteſt it too plainly. The declenſion of a lively Hope, unto which we are begotten and born by Regeneration; the grieving and quenching of the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of Adoption, and Earneſt of our Inhe-

ritance, ſhow that we are yet too unready.

The Promiſes, on which we muſt venture our Everlaſting Hopes, are not ſtudied, and underſtood, digeſted, and applied, as they ſhould be, and therefore we are not Ready. Our Deſires of the Coming of Chriſt, our Prayers for the haſtning of it, our anticipated Joy in the Fore-thoughts of it, are ſo low, and ſo imperfect, to what they ought to be, that they prove we are *Unready*. We do not Labour and Watch, Pray, and Hope, with a reſolved perſevering Zeal, and Conſtancy for the *Grace that is to be brought to us, at the Revelation of Chriſt*, as thoſe that are *Ready* for his Coming.

2. 'Tis further to be bewail'd, That *multitudes fancy, and ſuppoſe they are ready, when indeed they are not.* O how great is the number of ſuch! who imagine themſelves to be too well prepar'd already, to learn to Prepare. And therefore all the Warnings and Exhortations of the Word, make no impreſſion on them, becauſe they think themſelves not concern'd, tho' they have never accepted Chriſt, as the *Bridegroom* of their Souls, by an humble, penitent, unfeigned Dedication of themſelves to him, to love, pleaſe, and obey him above all. And their own Conſciences (if they would conſider, reflect,

and ſearch ) muſt tell them, that they are not *faithful Stewards* of their many Talents, as expecting to be called to an Account.

3. *The general Unconcernedneſs of the moſt, about any ſuch thing as this being Ready, ought greatly to be Lamented.* The moſt reckon it at that Diſtance, they will not trouble themſelves to enquire whether they be prepar'd, or no. Others are conſcious of their own Unreadineſs, and therefore do not care to think of Dying: Tho' they know not how ſoon they may be called; for many younger, and more likely to live, have died this laſt Year. Parents may ſurvive their Children, and lay thoſe little parts of themſelves in the Grave, before they make their own Beds there. Yet ſuch is the powerful Craft of Sathan to befool the Sinner, and ſuch the deceitfulneſs of Sin to harden the Heart, that ſome of the moſt unprepared, make a ſhift to live in peace, tho' they cannot tell but Death may open the Door into Eternity the next moment. They will not yet conſider it, and apply it to *their own caſe:* they will not know, that *their Judge* is at the Door, that *their* Day of Reckoning is at hand, that they are haſtning to the Tribunal of Chriſt, that *their* Judgment lingereth not, and their Damnation ſlumbereth not. One would wonder, what Apprehenſions, and

Thoughts of theſe Things, ſuch careleſs Chriſtians have, who durſt not ſay they disbelieve, or deny the Scripture Revelation, and yet feel no correſpondent Impreſſions, anſwerable to the Nature, Weight, and Tendency of ſuch Things.

Let me aſk thee, O Man, that haſt neglected hitherto to make Ready: Doſt thou think, that Chriſt will receive thy departing Soul at Death, or no? Will he acquit and own thee in the Judgment, or no? What ſay'ſt thou, haſt thou enquired, and examined, and made it thy buſineſs to know this? and to make ſure of it? How is it, that thy Mind is fill'd with other Thoughts? thy Mouth with other Talk? and thy Time employed about other Things? when thou art ſo near to the final Judgment of Chriſt, and ſeeſt ſo many Souls daily paſſing into another World. Wilt thou not conſider what ſhall become of them, and of thy ſelf? but ſtill continue to purſue ſome tranſitory Pleaſure, or Profit, while God and Heaven are neglected, and Chriſt deſpiſed, his Favour loſt, and thy own Soul loſt, or in the extreameſt danger of being ſo, becauſe thou art *not Ready*. Canſt thou think that Chriſt will *then* accept thee, if thou *now* neglect him? Canſt thou hope, that he will prove himſelf a Lyar, by owning ſuch, as he hath often declared he never will? O pity your ſelves in Time! that you may not be denied his pity at laſt. The Door of Grace is yet open, but how ſoon, how ſpeedily may it be ſhut! if now you will not enter. O what an unſpeakable Mercy is the offer from God, that *yet you may* enter! What would departed Souls, that died Unready, give for ſuch a Call of God? Hold a little, Tremble, and Believe, and delay no longer.

For *Direction*, in the general, Since the Bridegroom will come, and it may be in an hour when you do not look for him, ſee that you have Oyl in your Veſſels, and Lamps, as thoſe that wait for the Coming of their Lord. If thou haſt no Oyl, buy it; if thou haſt, burn it; if thou haſt no Wedding Garment, get one; if thou haſt, put it on; if thou haſt no true Love to God, never leave till the Holy Flame be kindled; if thou haſt any in truth, exerciſe and uſe it, as one that expects the Coming of Chriſt. More particularly,

1. Seek *Reconciliation* to God, by a Covenant Dedication of your ſelves to God in Chriſt, accepting him as offer'd in the Goſpel, and reſigning, and yielding your ſelves unfeignedly, and without reſerve, to be his.

2. Let the Work of *Mortification*, both as to Sin and the World, be progreſſive,

and conſtantly carried on, that you may be *found of him in Peace*, as to your State, *and without Spot*, as to your Frame, as well as *blameleſs*, as to your Converſation, 2 *Pet.* 3. 14. Sit looſe in your Affections from Earthly Things, that Death may not rend and tear you from that, which hath the chiefeſt poſſeſſion of your Hearts, for then you cannot meet the Summons of Death, but with an exceſſive Sorrow.

3. Be much in *Self-Examination*, that you may get over your Doubts and Fears, concerning your Adoption, and attain to a more well-grounded Hope, and Aſſurance of the ſpecial Love of Chriſt. What will it avail us, to think we are Pardoned, and ſhall be ſaved, and e're long to find our ſelves miſtaken when there can be no Remedy? You muſt *now* underſtand your danger, if ever you will be ſaved from it. And we have the ſame Rule and Law given to judge our ſelves by, that God will judge us by at laſt. Therefore retire, and examine your ſelves, whether you can obſerve the Seal and Earneſt of the Spirit of Grace upon your Hearts; whether you can review your Converſation and Courſe, as tranſacted in ſimplicity and godly Sincerity, as in the ſight of God, under the conduct of the ſame Spirit? whether this ſanctifying Spirit hath drawn out your Deſires

after Holineſs, and your Love to God, his Word, his Worſhip, and his Servants, ſo as to wean you from the World, and make you place your Hopes and Happineſs above; chooſing God for your only Portion and Chriſt for your Teacher, Saviour and Lord; enabling you to live with ſincere Deſires, and Endeavours to pleaſe and honour him; in the believing Expectation of what he hath purchas'd nd apromiſed; preferring the Hopes of it before all the Pleaſures, and Advantages of Sin, and the preſent Life. And if upon ſerious ſearch, your Hearts condemn you not, you may have confidence towards God. But how can you know theſe things without Examining? and how can you have this confidence, without ſuch a Knowledge? and how can you think of the Second Coming of Chriſt with comfort, without ſome ſuch good Hope thro' Grace.

4. You ſhould likewiſe, Endeavour to carry it in every *Relation*, and *Condition*, as expecting to be called to an Account, when your Lord ſhall come. Do nothing now, but you would be willing to hear of then; nothing that you would be aſhamed, or afraid to have ript up, opened, and diſcovered in that Day. Think with your ſelves often, Is this that I am now doing, the Life which I now lead, the Deſigns

that I now purſue, ſuch as will be ſweet or bitter to be remembred, when Chriſt ſhall come? Will it be to my Shame or Honour, to my Joy or my Confuſion, in the Day of Reckoning, when I muſt ſtand before my Judge? How many Temptations to Sin might this repel? How many neceſſary Duties might this awaken us to perform, eſpecially toward *Relations*?

It may now be a terrible Thought to ſome of us, to conſider and foreſee that thoſe of our *Relations* whom we moſt tenderly Love, are like to fall under the condemning Sentence of Chriſt, and periſh Eternally. You can hardly bear up now under the weight of ſuch a Thought. Will you not then awake, to Counſel, Warn, Reprove, Exhort, Admoniſh, and Intreat them, and do all you can to prevent it? But if they will not hearken, your Faithfulneſs ſhall be your Comfort, and their Condemnation ſhall not diminiſh your Happineſs, tho' it will aggravate their Doom, if you have done your Duty. I will inſtance in *one Relation.*

Suppoſe a wicked Child, to behold his Parents on the Right Hand of the Judge, (one or both of them) owned by Chriſt, rejoycing in his Love, and taking part with him, ſo as to be pleaſed with the Execution of his Righteous Sentence, without any ſuch Bowels of Pity toward them, as now they feel: And if we could imagine them to diſcourſe together, how might Holy Parents mind them, of the various Methods they uſed to prevent their Ruine; and of all the Counſels, Reproofs, and Prayers, with which they follow'd them from year to year. "I begot thee, or "brought thee forth; I laid thee in my "Boſom, I carried thee in my Arms; I "took care of thee in Infancy; I inſtructed "thee in Childhood; I look'd after thy "Education; I brought thee to the Publick Aſſemblies; I put thee upon Secret "Prayer; I warn'd thee of thy Danger "by bad Company; I urg'd thee to flee "youthful Luſts; I told thee what would "be the End and Iſſue; I forewarn'd thee "of this day; and of the Everlaſting Deſtruction that Chriſt had Threatned; and "of thy too late Repentance in the other "World; and that hereafter I ſhould ſee "thee condemned to Hell, without being "able to pity thee. And *now the Caſe is* "*thus*, I cannot but approve the Righteous Sentence of the glorious Judge; for "thou wouldeſt not prepare, and get Ready "for this Day, notwithſtanding thy many "Warnings and Calls, from God and Man "to do it.

Moreover, 5. Labour to ſtrengthen *Faith* concerning the *Certainty* and *Glory of Chriſt's* *Ap-*

*Appearing*, and the moſt important, awful *Conſequences* of it, both to the *Righteous*, and to the *Wicked*.

1. As to *the Certainty of his Coming.* Unbelief is at the bottom of our neglect to make Ready. We do not conſider the confirming Reaſons of the Truth of the Goſpel, and beg the Light and Influence of the Spirit, to perſwade us fully of this foundation Article. We take up with the Name of *Faith*, and do not Believe; with a notional, weak, ineffectual Faith, that may dwell in the Hearts of Hypocrites, or Devils; and therefore feel no influence by it to excite our Hopes, or Fears, or Preparation.

Did we indeed believe it, as an unqueſtionable Truth, *that Chriſt ſhall come again to judge the World*, we could not but fear to be found Unready. For whatever the diſtance be between this and that, Our Faith would repreſent it *near*, as if the thing were preſent; as if we ſaw the Redeemer in the Clouds, with the glorious Retinue of Bleſſed Angels, and Ten thouſand of his Saints. It would realize the Solemnity of his Tribunal, the Books being opened, and the Wicked trembling before their Judge, and the Righteous juſtified, and rejoycing in the Approbation of their Saviour.

Did we believe it *Certain*, we ſhould often put the Queſtion, How ſhall I appear and ſtand in the Judgment? How ſhall I give an account of all my Talents? What ſhall I anſwer when I am call'd to his Bar? what ſhall I do to be befriended, when I am tried for my Life? Therefore beg that God would fix a believing ſence of this upon your Hearts, that your Faith may be *the Evidence of things not ſeen.* That you may believe it as firmly, as if Doomsday were already come; as if you heard the Trump to ſound, and that Amazing Voice, *Ariſe ye Dead, and come to Judgment.*

2. Strengthen and increaſe Faith, concerning *the Glory of the Second Coming of Chriſt*, as well as the *Certainty* of it. He ſhall be revealed from Heaven, with viſible Glory in flaming Fire, with his mighty Angels, ſo that every Eye ſhall ſee him, and they alſo that pierced him. He ſhall come again *with Power and great Glory*, and the Voice of the Arch-Angel ſhall awaken the World, and fill them with an awful Reverence of their Glorious Judge. He that ſtoopt ſo low at firſt, to be cloathed with a mean diſguiſe, and to glorifie the Father in the form of a Servant, by the Sacrifice of himſelf for our Redemption, ſhall be publickly honoured in the view of all Mankind.

At his firſt Appearance he was a *Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief*, he made himſelf of no Reputation, was *deſpiſed and rejected of Men*; but he ſhall come again, openly to vindicate himſelf from the Contempt of his Enemies: *Every knee ſhall bow before him, and every Tongue confeſs him to be Lord!* And they who affronted his Throne, and lift up the Heel againſt him, ſhall be made his Footſtool. At firſt he appear'd with all the ſinleſs Infirmities of Humane Nature, but ſhall a ſecond time with all the Demonſtrations of the Divine Power, and Godhead.

3. How awful and important will be *the Conſequences* of his Coming to all Mankind?

1. *To the Wicked.* With what Amazement and Confuſion, with what Fear and Horror, with what Dread and Trembling, ſhall they, as guilty Priſoners, be made to ſtand before his Judgment Seat? What killing deſpair will ſeize their Hearts? Paleneſs and the Shadow of Death will cover their Faces. What Convulſions, and Gripes of Conſcience will then torment them? Where can they go? where can they hide? How can they appear? How can they avoid appearing? What can they ſay? How can they anſwer the Charge? or deny

ny the Accuſation? or evade the Sentence? or put off the Execution for a Day? or bear it for a Moment? Since they can never eſcape the Trial, or corrupt the Judge, or be pardon'd after Judgment, or get the Sentence to be reprieved, or the Execution deferr'd. It will *then* be in vain to cry for Mercy; for now the Day of Vengeance without Pity, and of Judgment without Mercy, is come. What Friend wilt thou go to then? where are they? who can plead for thee, or ſave thee, but he that will not? I would not for Ten thouſand Worlds, appear in thy Caſe, among thoſe that ſhall then be found *Naked*, and *Unready*. And are not theſe things fit to be now conſider'd, believ'd, and prepared for? What is all the Buſineſs and Affairs of this World? What but a Play, a Game, a Trifle, to theſe things?

2. *To the Righteous.* The Bridegrooms departure is not upon a Divorce: He ſhall come again, to be glorified in his Saints, and be admired of all them that believe. They ſhall ſee him, and meet him in the Air, and ſay, *Yonder is he* whom our Souls Love; yonder is the bleſſed Jeſus, who once came from Heaven, to die for us, and now comes to bring us to Heaven. We believed his Word, and behold now he

comes to make it good. They ſhall hear his abſolving Sentence; their Perſons ſhall be juſtified; their Cauſe ſhall be pleaded; their Sins ſhall be blotted out; their Sufferings, and Sorrows ſhall all be ended. They may therefore rejoyce in hope, and lift up their Heads in expectation of that Day; for the bleſſed Sentence ſhall raviſh their Hearts, when they ſhall be bid to *Enter into their Lord's Joy.* And hear thoſe endearing Words, from the great Redeemer, *Come ye bleſſed Children of my Father, take Poſſeſſion of the Inheritance prepared for you.*

Let us therefore pray for the Second Coming of Chriſt, and the haſtning of it, as all Believers under the Old Teſtament and New, have done. And in this poſture, Watching, Praying, Waiting, and Preparing for his laſt Appearance to *Judgment*, we ſhould *be Ready* for his particular Coming to us by *Death.*

*Laſtly, Let us improve every Warning of Divine Providence*, every *Death* and *Funeral* of our *Relations*, and *Acquaintance*, to promote our own Readineſs to follow. This is the Language of the late Providence that occaſions this Diſcourſe. This is the voice of God, by every breach he makes in our own, or our Neighbour's Family. *Be you alſo*

*alſo Ready: for you know not the Hour, when the Son of Man comes.* We loſe the Examples, and Holy Lives of our deceaſed Friends, for want of Imitation; and we loſe *their Deaths* too, if we be not awakened to prepare for *our own.* But alas! how ſoon do the Impreſſions wear off, of ſuch awakening Spectacles? It may be the ghaſtly looks, or dying groans of our dear Friends, or departing Relatives, gaſping out their laſt breath, and juſt paſſing into the other World, for the preſent, may affect us a little. It may be when we ſee an open Coffin in our own Houſe, or a Grave gaping to receive the Body of one we knew, and loved, and lately converſed with; this may move and ſtartle us a little. It may be, when we behold the Mournful Looks, and Habit, the Funeral Pomp and Solemnity, that attends them to the Houſe of Darkneſs, ſome ſerious Thoughts are excited; our Minds are aw'd into ſome Reflections upon our own Mortality. But when the Ceremony is over, and we are gone from ſuch a Spectacle; when the Dead are buried out of our ſight, and we engag'd among the living World again; how ſoon, alas! is all this forgotten? and how few are Gainers by ſuch a Loſs, in the manner they ſhould be, *i. e.* To take the Warning, *to be Ready, and Prepared for the Coming of Chriſt to* *us*: Which is as ſure, as if we were already dead.

*One help to get our ſelves* Ready *for* Death *and* Judgment, *is to conſider and improve the Death of* Others. *Either of ſuch, who were called, and not* Ready, *whoſe Caſe ſpeaks loudly to us not to delay, and trifle as they did: or of ſuch as were* Prepared, *and fit to Die, their Death hath alſo the like Voice of that in the Text,* Be you alſo Ready. *Our Deceaſed Friend, Mrs.* Gearing, *I am perſwaded, was of this latter ſort.*

---

§ 1. I *Know very well, that the praiſing of the Dead hath been ſcandalouſly abuſed, as a more cloſe way of flattering the living Relations, and therefore would be cautious what I ſpeak on ſuch Occaſions: But the Honour of God's Grace is not a little concern'd in the Honour of thoſe, in whom it did remarkably appear: And he hath promis'd, that they who ſerve, and follow him, ſhall be honoured. To mention what was really imitable and praiſe-worthy, needs no Apology, or Excuſe; the Matter carries its own Juſtification.*

§ 2. *You of this Congregation could not but obſerve her Diligence and Conſtancy in attending* *on the Publick Worſhip of the Lord's Day, and to ſhow forth the Lord's Death every Month, in the other Solemnity of the Supper. Her* early Attendance *here, before the Publick Worſhip began, tho' ſhe liv'd at a more remote diſtance than many of you, is not unworthy of your Imitation.*

§ 3. *Her ſtrict Seriouſneſs in* Family-Worſhip, *and* Cloſet Duties, *by which the Life and Vigour of practical Godlineſs is to be kept up, they who knew her beſt, were well acquainted with.*

§ 4. *There was one thing in her daily Courſe, which ſhould ſhame and awaken moſt Profeſſors,* viz. *the Conſcientious daily practice of* Self-reflection, *and* Examination; *reviewing and calling over the paſſages of every Day in the Evening. She made Conſcience every Night, to look back on the Duties ſhe had performed, and the Manner of 'em; on the Mercies ſhe had receiv'd; on the Errors, Weakneſſes, and Omiſſions, ſhe had been guilty of,* &c. *in order to* Repentance, *or* Thankſgiving. *Oh that there were more Such, concerning whom this may be truly ſaid! We ſhould be more Ready for the Table of the Lord every Month, and more Ready for the preſence of Chriſt at the Hour of Death, if we did thus review the Actions of every Day, at the cloſe of it.*

§ 5. *Not to inſiſt upon her Faithfulneſs, and Prudence, Tenderneſs and Affection, Affability, and Friendly Carriage in every Relation, with divers other things very Commendable in her Life. I ſhall only take notice of a few things concerning* her laſt Sickneſs, *which after Ten days determin'd in Death.*

§ 6. *Her* Patience, Submiſſion, *and* Reſignation *was anſwerable to the other part of her Character and Deportment; that is, truly Chriſtian. When ſometimes (by intervals) her Diſtemper did affect her Head, as ſoon as ſhe recovered the uſe of her Underſtanding, and a compoſed mind, very pertinent and earneſt Supplications to Heaven, diſcovered the holy Serious neſs of her Heart and Frame. When ſhe could hardly ſpeak more than* Yes, *or* No, *yet ſhe did ſufficiently ſignifie her Aſſent, and cordial Approbation of any ſeaſonable Religious Diſcourſe, that was made to her.*

§ 7. *She owned her* Hope *and* Truſt in the Mercy of God, thro' Jeſus Chriſt, *for Pardon and Eternal Life; and under the diſorders of ſo painful and violent a Fever, yet acknowledg'd ſhe had Peace within.*

§ 8. *The day before ſhe died, ſhe told a near Relation, that ſhe had a great Work to do on the morrow:*

*morrow: And when it was replied, that 'tis true,* It is a great and difficult Work to die; yet one moments Enjoyment of God in Heaven will make amends for all: *She very affectionately cries out,* I, ſo it will. I know that my Redeemer lives, and that I ſhall go to him, and be with him.

*§ 9. The Evening before her Departure, after I had prayed for her, in the preſence of ſeveral Relations and Friends, and ſeriouſly endeavour'd to commend her Soul into the Hands of Chriſt; I ask'd her, Whether* Jeſus Chriſt *were not the Chiefeſt of Ten thouſands to Her: Whether ſhe did not deſire and prize him above all: Whether ſhe had not given up her ſelf to him, again and again, with all her Heart and Soul, entirely, and without reſerve; and endeavour'd (Humane Infirmities, and Backſlidings repented of, excepted) to walk and live as a Follower of Chriſt, under the Conduct of his Spirit, and according to the Rule of his Word, and ſome other ſuch Queſtions, that might aſſiſt her to diſcern the Truth of her Grace,* &c. *She anſwered in the Affirmative, with extraordinary Modeſty, Humility, Thankfulneſs and Affection: And gave me her hand at* Parting, *with Thanks for my Prayers and Aſſiſtance, begging of God the beſt of Bleſſings for me and mine, which were her own words.*

§ 10. *After which, in a difficult ſtruggle with the King of Terrors, we hope and truſt ſhe was ſupported by the Everlaſting Arms of that Powerful Grace of Chriſt, who hath conquer'd Death, and him that had the Power of it, the Devil. So that we may now ſay,* O Death where is thy Sting, *&c. God grant thoſe lively Impreſſions of Death, and another World, which the Relations then preſent ſeem'd to have on that occaſion, may not eaſily wear off, or loſe their proper Influence!*

*And now*, Chriſtians, *let us mix our Sorrows for our Deceaſed Friend, with the Joys of Faith, on the account of her being made meet, and ready for the Preſence of Chriſt. Some Sorrow is allowable, were it but as Death enters into the World, as the fruit of Sin: But ſhe being* Prepared for Death, *and made meet for the Promiſed Bleſſedneſs, beyond the Grave; that ought to be the Matter of* our Joy, *which we believe is ſo of* hers. *And do we not ourſelves Hope, (and have we any better, greater Thing we hope for, than) to poſſeſs that Happineſs with Chriſt, which we believe ſhe is poſſeſſed of? Is it not then unreaſonable, to make that the Subject of immoderate Mourning, and exceſſive Lamentation,* as to our departed Friends, *which is the principal Matter of Hope and Comfort,* as to our own Souls? *And ſhall* *we for the ſake of a* leſſer Good, *which we ſuppoſe to our ſelves by their living longer, deſire to deprive them of a* Greater, *which they cannot attain but by dying? Let us rather be awaken'd, edifi'd, and encourag'd by their Examples, who by Faith and Patience, and Perſeverance, are gone to inherit the Promiſes: and by their* Funerals *be excited to foreſee, and make Ready for* our own. *Oh that the Call of God, by this Breach among us, may be underſtood and obeyed! For this it ſpeaks to every one in particular*, Be you alſo Ready. *Amen.*

THE END.

# *Sickneſs and Death for the Glory of* CHRIST.

---

## A

# Funeral Sermon

## ON THE DECEASE OF

## Mrs. *ELIZ. SHOWER.*

Who died the 24*th* of *Aug.*1691.

---

*By* JOHN SPADEMAN, *Miniſter of the Engliſh Church at* Rotterdam.

---

*LONDON:* Printed for *Sam. Crouch*
at the Corner of *Popes-Head Alley* in
*Cornhil*; and *J. Lawrence*, at the *Angel*
in the *Poultry*. 1699.

# TO

## My Honoured Friend,

## Mr. *SHOWER.*

SIR,

*WHen after an unpleaſing Separation, the Providence of God gave Opportunity of Renewing our Converſe, in your Habitation; I promis'd my ſelf an unmix'd Satisfaction, during my ſtay with you: And as none is more oblig'd to rejoyce in all the Good, which you, or yours, are Partakers of; ſo none could be more heartily diſpos'd to do it. Indeed the Hopes of Enjoying your Society ſweetned the Fatigues of a Voyage, which (after many Years abſence) I lately made unto my own Country: In which I was truly delighted to find, that not only your Perſon and Miniſtry were acceptable and uſeful, but that*

*that there was a Proſpect that God would make your Houſe to grow. But when I was preparing to return, I perceived that God had brought me to mourn with you, under a moſt afflictive* Providence: *In which, though my Character had made me unfit to preſent Comfort to you, yet few of your Friends had more Light to diſcern the deepneſs of your Wound, and greatneſs of your Loſs. For the intimate Friendſhip between us, and our Cohabitation in* Holland, *gave me opportunity of underſtanding the Worth of* Her, *whom now you lament. Though this Conſideration, as it makes your Trial greater, renders your Reſignation more acceptable to God, and uſeful to Men.*

*To part with an ordinary Poſſeſſion with willingneſs, is a-kin to that* Patience *which is exerciſ'd under merited Puniſhment, which in the Apoſtle's judgment hath no* Glory *or* Commendation *in it;* ( 1 Pet. 1. 20. ) *But 'tis an Heroick Spirit, a reſemblance of that Faith which dignifi'd the Father of all who*

*who believe, to give up a rare and endearing Treaſure: And if any Conſideration hath ſtrength to work this Noble Diſpoſition in our Souls, that which is taken from the* Glory *of God, and the Redeemer, hath: 'Twas this which led my Thoughts unto the Meditations in the following Diſcourſe, which though much below the dignity of the Subject, am willing to make thus publick, that they may be a laſting Monument of the Gratitude and Reſpect I owe unto your Deceas'd Conſort, and with the Divine Bleſſing, may be uſeful to thoſe who may be call'd unto like Trials.*

*Many of your Brethren would have performed this Service, with far more Juſtice unto both the Subjects of the Diſcourſe, than one who is in a journeying State: But when your ſelf, and ſome near Relatives deſir'd this laſt Office, I was not unwilling to comply; eſpecially having the advantage of knowing by how ſingular a Providence your Marriage-Union was brought about, and how happy it was to you both.*

*I need not tell you how this ſorrowful Event makes the Thoughts of my intended*

*Voyage much more uneaſie to me, who muſt leave ſo dear a Friend depriv'd of his delightful* Half: *But an* Intereſt *in the* whole *Deity; (who cannot die) will abundantly compenſate this loſs, which together with your long continuance in Temple-Service, and the deſirable Succeſs of your Labours, is with utmoſt Earneſtneſs prayed for, by*

SIR,

London, *Sept.* 1.
1691.

*Your Affectionate*

*Faithful Servant,*

J. Spademan.

# Sickneſs and Death for the Glory of Chriſt.

## A
## Funeral Sermon, &c.

---

### JOHN XI. 4.

*When Jeſus heard that, he ſaid, This Sickneſs is not unto Death, but for the Glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.*

THE firſt hearing of theſe Words, which ſpeak of *Sickneſs* and *Death*, may give ſome Indication of the ſorrowful Occaſion, that hath drawn more than uſual Numbers unto this *Place*: From which it hath pleas'd the All-wiſe God to remove *One*, who was a principal Ornament of it; *One* whoſe conſtant Attendance, and Chriſtian Deportment in it, carried an exciting Influence unto all who were Witneſſes of 'em. And therefore it is no ſmall loſs unto this whole Society, that they ſhall no longer enjoy the Advantage of ſuch an Example; but even the privation of ſuch, whoſe Lives were Exemplary, is capable of affording very conſiderable Advantage. As we know that not only the Light of the *Heavenly Bodies*, is uſeful unto this lower World, their *Eclipſes* have their Advantages too, which are therefore thought worthy of peculiar Obſervation. It hath been a received Opinion, that the *Eclipſes* of the Sun and Moon have an Inſtructive ſignification, by which the Inhabitants of the Earth are warn'd and admoniſh'd. The Truth of that Opinion hath been queſtion'd: But 'tis certain that the Death of a Chriſtian, who did *ſhine as a Light in the World*, hath an Inſtructive Language, and is proper to teach very profitable Leſſons unto them who ſurvive. Such Providences do indeed call nnto Mourning and Sorrow; but this is not the Principal Intention of them. There is ſomething of far greater Importance to employ our Minds, on ſuch ſad Occaſions, and that is, to receive the Spiritual Inſtruction that is then preſented unto us. It hath been counted an Inſtance of the Folly of ſome Superſtitious Heathens, that they would make a hideous noiſe whenever they ſaw the Sun, or Moon darkned, and variouſly expreſs'd their Fears of loſing thoſe Luminaries, but made no uſeful Enquiries into the Cauſes and Nature of thoſe

*Phænomena.* And 'tis very reproachful unto profeſſing Chriſtians, when they imagine that a paſſionate ſorrow is the only, or chief buſineſs that the Death of Chriſtian Friends calls 'em too. Our Deportment on ſuch Occaſions, ſhould correſpond with our Chriſtian Hope, which aſſures us, that they who *are fallen aſleep in Chriſt* are not loſt, (which in the Apoſtles Judgment is a Self-evident Abſurdity, 1 *Cor.* 15. 18.) A deceaſed Chriſtian is not only more ſafe, but far more happy and honourable, than *he* or *ſhe* was in this World: ſo that they need not our Tears; which yet on other Accounts are juſt and reaſonable, but they muſt not hinder our ſerious Enquiries into the Nature and Uſes of ſuch a ſorrowful Object. When therefore we have loſt a living Example *in the Deceaſed* Mrs. *Shower*, we are oblig'd to make ſuch Enquiries, with relation unto her Death, that we may get ſome conſiderable and laſting Advantage from it; and in order unto this, I have thought theſe words of the Redeemer, ſpoken upon a like occaſion, would afford ſeaſonable Meditations, that may aſſiſt us to improve the late ſorrowful Providence. And when I have laid down the *general* Inſtructions contain'd in 'em, I ſhall endeavour to apply 'em unto the *particular* Subject of our Sorrow.

To underſtand the *grounds* and *occaſion* of the words read to you, we need only look

back

back to the few Verſes which precede the Text: And in the firſt *Verſe* we find, that a Friend and Favourite of Chriſt, *Lazarus* the Brother of *Martha* and *Mary*, is arreſted by a threatning Sickneſs. *The favour and friendſhip of Chriſt do not exempt from Sickneſs and Death.* A *Lazarus*, whom Jeſus loved, is ſick and dieth. His Siſters ſeem to have concluded, That the Affection which Chriſt had for their Brother, ſhould have ſecur'd him from theſe Calamities; and ('tis probable) they thought, that nothing but the diſtance of place could hinder Chriſt from relieving their Brother's Caſe, which therefore they take care to acquaint him with, and ſend this ſorrowful Meſſage unto the Redeemer, *Lord, behold he whom thou loveſt is ſick*, verſe 3. They chuſe indeed the fitteſt Argument to plead on this occaſion with Chriſt, when they repreſent to *him* the Intereſt that their Brother had in *his* peculiar *Affection.* They don't ſay, 'He 'who is our Brother, and Beloved by us, 'or he who loveth thy Perſon, and Ser'vice, is ſick: They knew, that ſuch Conſiderations (tho' very forcible among Men) could have but little weight upon *him*, who cannot be made a Debtor by all the Kindneſs and Service that any can expreſs toward him. No, they rightly conclude, that the Redeemer's Love is free, and without any Obligation, and muſt be the only

Original of all that Relief, which he at any time beſtows. Thus far, I ſay, theſe Siſters were in the right; but the Particle *Behold!* (which is a Note of Admiration) intimates the Miſtake which they were guilty of, and that they were *ſurpriz'd* at the Sickneſs and Danger of their Brother, becauſe he was one whom Jeſus loved. Had this been the Caſe of a *Scribe*, or a *Phariſee* (two Orders which Chriſt had no kindneſs for,) this would not have appeared ſtrange unto them, as it did, that one whom Chriſt loved, ſhould languiſh under a painful and threatning Diſeaſe. No queſtion they had often ſeen, and heard the Redeemer expreſſing a peculiar kindneſs unto their Brother, whoſe ſickneſs and danger made him now a Spectacle of Pity: And they knew not how to reconcile theſe two together, and therefore were inclin'd to hope, that his love unto their Brother (as ſoon as he had an account of his danger) would induce him to make the greateſt haſte to viſit, and heal him, (both which he had done unto others who were Strangers.) But *he* intended to do neither; he determin'd to delay his Viſit unto *Lazarus*, until he had been four days dead: But tho' he would not heal and recover ſick *Lazarus*, he ſends a moſt excellent Remedy unto his Siſters, to cure their Miſtakes, to eaſe and heal their Minds, which was the intention of this Reply unto their Importunate Meſſage. *This Sickneſs is not unto Death, but for the Glory of God*, &c.

In which we are called to conſider, 1. *The Manner.* 2. *The Deſign.* 3. *The Import of this Anſwer.*

I would make a few Reflections upon the two former, and then ſhall inſiſt upon the laſt, as moſt ſuitable to our preſent Affair.

I. As to *the Manner* of this Anſwer: 'Tis eaſie to perceive the obſcurity and dubiouſneſs of the former part; *This Sickneſs is not unto Death*: For the Event did (at leaſt) ſeem to contradict the literal meaning of this Declaration, which expreſly denies that the ſickneſs of *Lazarus* was unto Death, and yet *Lazarus* dieth: This ſeeming Contradiction, muſt render this part of the Anſwer dubious and dark, unto thoſe to whom it was ſent. Indeed, notwithſtanding this Obſcurity, there was a moſt certain Truth in this part of the Anſwer, which ſpeaks of ſuch a *Death*, as truly anſwers that Character, *viz.* Such a Privation of Life, as puts a final Period unto it; on which account it can truly be ſaid of the Dead, *That their places know 'em no more, and that they go the way whence they ſhall not return*; Job 8.10. chap. 16.22. As alſo, *That they ſee corruption*, Acts 13.36. The Body quite loſing that Organization, that makes it a fit Habitation for a Humane Soul. This is the primary and proper Notion of Death, and under which the Spirit of God ſpeaks of it: (See *Rom.* 5. 12, 14. 1 *Cor.* 15. 21, 26, 54, 56. not to mention ſeveral other places.) Unto *ſuch a Death* the ſickneſs of *Lazarus* was not; his Death was not a final Period, but only a ſhort Interruption or Ceſſation of Life, which (like ſome Rivers which run under Ground for a ſpace;) only for a while diſappear'd, and then was again brought to light. This being granted, we cannot deny, that there is ſome darkneſs in the manner of Expreſſion. Had it ſo pleaſed the Redeemer, he could have ſpoken in a much plainer Language; he could have ſaid, 'Tho' this Sickneſs ſhall deprive *Lazarus* of his Life, yet it ſhall ſoon be reſtored 'to him again; tho' he ſhall truly die, yet 'he ſhall not long remain under the power 'of Death; for I deſign to work a Miracle 'to raiſe him from the Dead. Thus could the Redeemer have expreſſed himſelf, had it ſo pleaſed him; but he chuſeth to ſpeak obſcurely, not only to theſe Siſters, but afterward to his Apoſtles, when he ſaid, *Our Friend* Lazarus *ſleepeth*, v. 11. Which Metaphorical and Dark way of ſpeaking led them into a miſtake, as we read *v.* 13. Many other Inſtances of this kind might be produc'd; as that which this Evangeliſt relateth, *Ch.*16.16,17,18. And as the Language, ſo the Carriage of Chriſt hath Obſcurity in it; his *ways are unſearchable, and his footſteps are not known*, both with reſpect unto viſible Providences, and inviſible Dealings with the Soul.

Ma-

Many there are whom Chriſt really loveth, who walk in Darkneſs, are brought into a kind of a Labyrinth, where they are ſtrangely perplext; and are tempted to conclude, That their Lord hath quite forſaken, and caſt 'em off, when he retains the kindneſs and moſt gracious purpoſes toward 'em. As God did toward *Abraham* when he commanded him to go out of his Country, and yet did not acquaint him with the Place which was deſign'd to be his Inheritance, *Heb.* 11. 8. Thus was *Abraham* try'd, and ſo are the Children of *Abraham*. And indeed this conduct of God is admirably ſuited unto the ſtate of Probation in which we now are. All that Darkneſs and Perplexity which at any time we are brought into, are deſign'd by God, to try and diſcover the Sincerity and Conſtancy of our Obedience. And 'tis our grand Concern to ſtand out this Trial, to undergo this Probation aright; and then whatever Darkneſs there is now in the Dealings of Chriſt, he will after a while ſcatter every Cloud, and will be an everlaſting Light unto us. 'Twere eaſie to make large Reflections upon this Subject, but your own Meditation can ſupply this Defect. Nor may I dwell long upon the

II. Obſervable in the Text: The *Deſign* of this Anſwer made by Chriſt, which was to afford preſent Support unto the dejected Siſters of *Lazarus*. He whoſe Eye diſcerns the moſt hidden and diſtant Objects, knows how their tender Hearts were diſquieted; and that ſuch a Spectacle as a diſeaſed dying Brother muſt wound and afflict their Souls; and the more, when their Expectations were diſappointed, as to the ſpeedy Viſit of Chriſt. 'What! (might they be apt to argue) not 'make ſo *charitable*, ſo *ſeaſonable* a Viſit, to one 'whom he loveth, to one who needs his help, 'and muſt periſh without it? Is this Kind'neſs, to neglect a diſtreſſed Friend, till Life 'and all be gone? Such diſquieting Thoughts would begin to ruſh into, and diſorder their Minds: Now 'twas to ſtill this Tempeſt, that the Redeemer ſends this Reply to 'em, *This Sickneſs is not unto Death, but for the Glory of God*, &c. *q. d.* 'Though the Danger 'and Progreſs of this Sickneſs, joyn'd with 'my ſeeming Neglect of their Brother, will 'be an Occaſion of Trouble unto them; 'Sorrow and Fear will take hold of their Spi'rits, yet let not their Hearts be troubled, 'there is no juſt ground of diſquieting Fear; 'notwithſtanding the diſmal Appearances, 'this Matter will have a happy and honou'rable Iſſue. *When our Lord Jeſus doth not grant the expected Relief, yet he always provides Support and Conſolation for his faithful Followers.* When *He* determin'd to ſend away the Multitudes who had followed him into the Wilderneſs, he reſolves that he will not ſend 'em away faſting, leſt they ſhould *faint by the way*, Matth. 16. 32. Though they muſt for a time be deprived of his Preſence, yet he takes care, that they might not *faint* and periſh. This was his Carriage toward his Apoſtles in general, and more particularly toward the Apoſtle *Paul*, who when he *beſought the Lord thrice that the Meſſenger of* Satan *might depart from him*; tho' this Requeſt was not granted; tho' the *Thorn* in the *Fleſh* was not removed; yet this moſt ſupporting Anſwer was given to him, *My Grace is ſufficient for thee*, 2 Cor. 12. 9. Sometimes the Carriage of Chriſt bears an Aſpect of Unkindneſs and Neglect; but even at ſuch a time, his Heart is fill'd with Love, and his Hand is employ'd to Support. 'Tis worthy our notice, what care the Spirit of God hath taken to remove the Suſpition of Unkindneſs in the Redeemer, toward his Friend *Lazarus*, whom he refus'd to Viſit and Recover, as his Siſters requeſted and expected; for in the Verſe which immediately follows this Anſwer of Chriſt, the Evangeliſt adds this cautioning Remark, *Now* Jeſus *loved* Martha, *and her Siſter, and* Lazarus. His not complying with their intimated Deſire (of having their Brother ſpeedily recover'd) did not proceed from Unkindneſs, or want of Affection (tho' there was appearance of them.) No, he bore the ſame Love unto a ſick and dying *Lazarus*, as if he had wrought a Miracle to prevent his Sickneſs and Death. 'Twere eaſie to enlarge upon this Head, but I muſt proceed unto the

III. And Principal Obſervable in the Text, The *Import* and *Sence* of this *Anſwer*: And if it be remembred that the Sickneſs of *Lazarus* was Mortal, there will be found theſe two General *Propoſitions* contain'd in it.

I. *The Sickneſs and Death of thoſe who are the Friends of Chriſt do bring a peculiar Glory unto God, and the Redeemer.*

II. *This one Conſideration is ſufficient to quiet and ſupport the Followers of Chriſt under thoſe ſorrowful Providences.*

I need not ſpend time to prove how evidently theſe Truths are contain'd in this Anſwer of Chriſt: which though given in a particular Caſe, yet carrieth ſuch a general Inſtruction, as reacheth unto Chriſtians in all Ages of the World. 'Tis granted, that there were ſingular Circumſtances that attended the Sickneſs and Death of *Lazarus*, and a moſt glorious Miracle was wrought in raiſing him from the Dead: But notwithſtanding, there are other grounds which juſtifie the general Concluſions which are drawn from the words. In which 'tis manifeſt (as has been obſerv'd) our Lord deſign'd to quiet and eaſe the troubled Minds of *Lazarus*'s Siſters, who had now a ſorrowful Proſpect of loſing a beloved Brother. And in order to this, he thought it enough (without mentioning his miraculous Raiſing from the Dead) only to inform them, That the threatning Sickneſs of their Brother was *for the Glory of God, and that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.* This one Conſideration, when it finds due Entertainment in, and hath a right Operation upon a believing Soul, is able to ſtill all the diſquieting Motions that Sorrow and Fear have raiſed there.

I have not deſign'd a diſtinct handling of theſe Two Propoſitions; 'twill be as uſeful to joyn both together in a plain and inſtructive Method: And therefore ſhall

1. Give a ſhort Account of the *Glory* of God and Chriſt.

2. Shew how the *Sickneſs* and *Death* of thoſe who are the Friends of Chriſt does contribute unto it.

3. On what Accounts the Conſideration of this hath ſuch a *quieting* and *ſupporting Influence* upon a Chriſtian; and afterward draw ſome Inſtructive *Inferences* from theſe memorable words. As to the

1. The Nature of that Glory which belongs unto God and Chriſt: On which I ſhall only make a very few Remarks, becauſe it may be hoped that few Chriſtians are unacquainted with this common Subject.

*Glory*, in its general Idea, or Notion, is nothing but ſome great Excellence manifeſted and acknowledged; whence 'tis that *it* makes ſo very ſtrong an Impreſſion upon Intelligent Creatures, and the deſire of *it*, hath ſo univerſal an Influence. More particularly,

1. The Glory of God is the Manifeſtation of the great and adorable *Excellencies* which are in the *Deity*, both abſolutely and relatively conſider'd. When the *Vertues* (as the *Greek* Expreſſion is, 1 *Pet.* 2. 10.) *of God are ſhown forth*, ſo as to be acknowledg'd and eſteemed by his Creatures: When his inflexible Juſtice, and ſpotleſs Purity, his unſearchable Wiſdom, and infallible Truth, his Almighty Power, and inexhauſtible Goodneſs do ſhine forth, and are ſet in a juſt Light, then the Glory of God appears in open view, *Numb.* 14. 21. God ſweareth that *all the Earth ſhould be filled with the Glory of the Lord*; becauſe he intended to diſplay his Juſtice and Holineſs, in puniſhing and conſuming the murmuring *Iſraelites*. Thus 'tis ſaid, *Pſal.* 102. 16. *When the Lord buildeth up* Zion, *he ſhall appear in his Glory*, becauſe that Work would manifeſt the Power and Veracity of God.

2. The Glory of Chriſt, is, the ſhewing forth that *Excellence* which belongs unto his *Mediatory Office*; accordingly, when he wrought his firſt Miracle at *Cana*, he is ſaid to have *manifeſted forth his Glory*, John 2. 11. All the Evidences which bear Witneſs unto his Prieſtly, or Regal, or Teaching Offices, do glorifie the Redeemer, 2 *Pet.* 1. 17.

3. It muſt be remembred, That the Glory of the *Deity*, is diſtinct from that of the *Redeemer*; yet they are never ſeparated from, much leſs oppoſed unto each other. 'Tis otherwiſe, as to the Glory of God, and of a Creature; theſe do often diſagree and claſh againſt each other. When *Herod* accepted an undue Honour from a flattering Crowd; this took away the Honour that was *due unto God*, Acts 12. 23. but the *Honour* that is *given unto Chriſt*, doth bring *Glory unto God*, Joh.17.1. Theſe two are ſo inſeparably joyn'd together, that they can never be put aſunder. Let us now enquire.

2. How the *Sickneſs* and *Death* of thoſe who are the Friends of Chriſt, do bring *Glory* unto God and the Redeemer: While our Eye is fixt only upon the dark ſide (or Superficies) of this Object, we ſhall be tempted to put ſuch a Queſtion as once *Nathanael* did concerning *Nazareth*, John 1. 46. *Can any good thing* come from ſuch Evil? Can ſo barren a Soil produce ſuch precious Fruit as the Glory of God? Can this dark and diſmal Cloud ſend forth ſuch a refreſhing Light? At the firſt view it ſeems diſhonourable unto God, when theſe Bodies, which are his Temples, are demoliſh'd and laid in the Duſt: This, I ſay, ſeems a Diſparagement unto him who rais'd and dwelt in 'em. When theſe pleaſant Plants which ſtood in the Courts of God are overturn'd, this ſeems

a Damage unto the Heavenly Husbandman: But notwithſtanding theſe Objections of Senſe, 'tis undeniably true, that the Sickneſs and Diſſolution of Chriſtians, do really contribute unto the Glory of God and Chriſt. The Evidences which confirm this, do relate both unto thoſe Chriſtians who are remov'd by Death, and unto thoſe who ſurvive.

1. With reſpect unto the Dying Friends of Chriſt themſelves: Their *Sickneſs* and *Death* do many ways bring Glory unto God and the Redeemer.

1. The Divine *Veracity* or *Truth* is glorified by executing the Primitive Sentence, which hath been given againſt all the Poſterity of fallen *Adam*, Gen. 3. 19. *Duſt thou art, and unto Duſt thou ſhalt return.* A peculiar Glory redounds unto God, when theſe Declarations which ſignifie his Counſel and Purpoſe are punctually accompliſht. (As on the contrary, nothing is more diſhonourable in its own Nature than *Falſhood*, which is counted, even by Lyars themſelves, an intolerable Reproach.) Compare *Numb.* 14. *ver.* 21. with *ver.* 35. The Death of every Chriſtian doth ſeal unto the Truth of God.

2. The Divine *Holineſs*, and hatred of Sin, are honour'd by the *Sickneſs* and *Death* of thoſe Chriſtians who have provok'd the Anger of God, though they die in Peace. We have memorable Inſtances in *Moſes*, in *Joſiah*, and the *Corinthian* Chriſtians; ſome of

whom were cut off by Death, though no Condemned with the World, 1 *Cor.*11. 30, 32. Concerning *Moſes*, we read, that by his unadviſed Language he offended God: At one time he complain'd of his Service and Burthen, and deſired rather to *die*, than *bear i any longer*, Numb. 11. 14, 15. At another time he ſpoke with indecent Paſſion unto the *Iſraelites*; and then God pronounc'd the *Arreſt* which you read, *Numb.*20.12. That he ſhould not bring the *Iſraelites* into the *Promiſed Land*. Now the executing of that Sentence did glorifie God, becauſe it manifeſted his Holineſs, which could not behold the defiling Blemiſhes that were in *Moſes*, who was one of the moſt eminent Favourites of God.

3. The Divine *Sovereignty* and *Dominion* are honour'd by the Obedience and Reſignation of Sick and Dying Believers: When a Chriſtian exerciſes that Submiſſion unto the Orders of God, that he willingly drinks the bittereſt Cup which his Father gives him; how honourable muſt this be unto God! This laſt Act of Obedience crowns the whole Chriſtian Courſe: Certainly there is no Spectacle more grateful unto God, than a Chriſtian chearfully yielding back his Soul unto him who gave it: 'Twas a reſigning Obedience that rendred the Death of Chriſt *a Sacrifice of a ſweet ſmelling ſavour* unto God, who was in a moſt eminent manner glorified by it: Though a Dying Chriſtian cannot

offer an Atoning Sacrifice, yet he is a kind of *Holocauſt*, when his Death is perfum'd with a choſen Submiſſion unto the diſpoſing Will of God. On this Account *the Death of the Saints*, (or as the *Hebrew* word imports) the Favourites, *is precious in the ſight of the Lord*, Pſal. 116. 15.

4. The *Powerful Grace of Chriſt* is honour'd by the inward Support and Refreſhment which ſick and dying Chriſtians receive from him; at a time when the *Daughters of Muſick are brought low*, and all the Pleaſures of Life are without reliſh; then to feel an invigorating ſtrength which renews the inner Man, when the outer decays, and is falling down; this magnifieth the powerful Grace of God, *who giveth power to the Faint*; *and to them that have no Might, encreaſeth Strength*, Iſa. 40. 29. A Principle of Natural Courage will afford ſome Support; but 'tis Divine Grace alone which can enable a Chriſtian to Triumph over the Pain and Danger of a Mortal Sickneſs, 2 *Cor*. 5. 6.

5. Eſpecially God and Chriſt are glorified in the *Victory* which a Chriſtian gains over Death: This laſt Enemy is a very Formidable one. An *Alexander*, who could Encounter the vaſt Armies of *Aſian* Monarchs, who had deſpiſed the Terrour of Battels, in his laſt Sickneſs was ſo afraid of Death, that his Court was fill'd with Diviners and Victims, and all imaginable Methods were try'd to

preſerve his Life. When therefore a Chriſtian, though of the tender, fearful Sex, is raiſed above the Fear of Death, is *confident, and willing rather to be abſent from the Body, and preſent with the Lord*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 2 *Cor.* 6.5. This doth highly honour the Grace and Power of the Redeemer, through whom alone it is that *a Chriſtian is more than a Conquerour*, Rom. 8. 36, 37.

6. The Redeemer is glorified in that *Bleſſedneſs* which he immediately confers upon the Souls of his deceaſed Friends. No ſooner had the *Iſraelites* paſs'd the *Red Sea*, and got upon free Land, but they ſend up their joyful Praiſes, and mention how glorioully God had Triumphed over their Enemies. What Heart can conceive the Songs of Praiſe, which Celebrate the Lamb, and him who ſits upon the Throne, when one believing Soul is ſet free from the Houſe of Bondage, and tranſplanted into the Heavenly Country? when a Soul that is Impriſon'd and Fetter'd in a Houſe of Clay, is received into the heavenly Habitations which the Redeemer hath prepared? Surely, if thoſe who heard of the Converſion of *Paul*, glorified God in him, or on his account; thoſe who are Witneſſes and Spectators of a far more ſurprizing Change, could not be wanting in their Admiration and Praiſes of that God who Crowns with unfading Glory.

7. The Death of a Chriſtian brings glory

unto the Redeemer, as it is the Occaſion of that aſtoniſhing Operation, which will *raiſe the diſſolved Body*, and transform it into the likeneſs of his own moſt glorious Body. The final Conquering of the laſt Enemy, muſt be exceeding glorious unto that Power which effects it. The Raiſing of *Lazarus*, and re-inſtating his Body in a periſhing Life, did glorifie the Redeemer; and this he had his Eye upon in making this Anſwer: What then muſt be the Raiſing of a Corrupted Body unto a bleſſed Immortality? By which the Children of the Reſurrection are made like the Angels of God. Read and conſider that memorable paſſage, 2 *Theſſ.* 1.10. Let us now briefly reflect upon the

2. Evidence which I propounded, *viz.* How the *Sickneſs* and *Death* of Chriſtians glorifie God, with reſpect unto them who ſurvive, whether they be more nearly or diſtantly related. And

1. God is thus glorified on ſuch Occaſions, becauſe he manifeſts his Divine Power in compenſating, and ſupplying that Loſs. When uſeful and ſerviceable Chriſtians are removed by Death, nothing but Almighty Power can fill up ſuch a void empty ſpace, and raiſe up others to carry on his Work; ſo that the Church reſembles that Poetical Tree, in which, as faſt as one Branch was broken off, another did ſpring in the ſame place: Thus when *Moſes* dies, God finds

a *Joſhua* who was qualified to ſucceed him: When a *David* is laid unto his Fathers, and ſees Corruption, God fills his Throne with a *Solomon*.

2. The Exerciſes of Grace in ſurviving Relatives or Acquaintance, doth glorifie God on ſuch Occaſions. When holy *Job*, upon the ſurprizing Death of all his Children (at the ſame time) doth Adore the Sovereignty of God, and bleſſeth his Name, when he took his deareſt Comforts away; this did effectually refute the reproaching Accuſation of Satan, and brought a ſingular Honour to God; who is alſo

3. *Glorified* in the Comforting of thoſe who are troubled and caſt down by ſuch Providences: This is one glorious Character of the bleſſed God, *That he comforteth thoſe who are caſt down*, 2 Cor. 7. 6. Did not his Hand bind up the Wound, no other could do it; all the Conſolations which a Creature can preſent, are weak and ineffectual things; but the Supports of the Heavenly Comforter are never more ſenſible, than under the Senſe of Afflictive Providences, 2 *Cor.* 1. 3, 4. In the

4th. And laſt place, The *Sickneſs* and *Death* of Chriſtians bring Glory unto God, as they are ſerviceable unto the Souls of them who ſurvive: As thoſe Fruits that fall from the Tree, and lye about it, make the Soyl more fruitful; ſuch ſorrowful Providences being excellent Inſtructions about our Duty, and

Powerful Arguments to excite us unto our great Work: What the Apoſtle ſaith concerning his *Bonds*, was equally true concerning his *Death*: They were *for the furtherance of the Goſpel*, Phil.1. How many have owed their Converſion and Eſtabliſhment unto the *Counſels* and *Examples* of dying Chriſtians? The Hiſtories of every Church abound with ſuch Inſtances. I ſhould now have ſhewed,

3. On what accounts this Conſideration is ſufficient to *Quiet* and *Support* a Chriſtian under ſuch ſorrowful Providences: Of this I ſhall give this Threefold Account.

1. That *Love* which a Chriſtian bears unto God and Chriſt, makes their Honour dearer unto him than any Intereſt of his own; and conſequently, the advancing of that will ſweeten all the Croſſes that can oppreſs him. When *Jeptha*'s Victory over the *Amonites* had got him more than ordinary Honour; this was ſo pleaſing to his Daughter, that ſhe was willing to endure the harſh Effects of her Father's Vow, *Judg.* 10. 36. Such a temper there was in the Apoſtle, when he could declare that his chief Expectation and Deſign was, that Chriſt might be magnified in his Body, whether by Life or Death, *Phil.* 1. 20.

2. A Chriſtian knows that when God and Chriſt are glorified, then the grand *Purpoſe* and *End* of God are attained. We are ſure that the bleſſed God cannot deſign any Gain or Profit to himſelf in his Acting, but his

deſign is to get himſelf Glory; and it muſt be very delightful unto God, when this Counſel of God is accompliſh'd.

3. A Chriſtian obtains his own chief *Requeſt* when God is glorified; all his other Petitions are ſubordinate unto this. He remembers that the Hallowing or Glorifying of God's Name ſtands in the very firſt place in that Exemplary Prayer which Chriſt hath left unto the Church; and therefore when God doth glorifie himſelf, though in a way that is grievous unto the Humane Nature, yet a Chriſtian Rejoyceth. And now it were eaſie to draw many inſtructive Inferences from this Anſwer made by Chriſt: As,

*Applicat.*

1. It will follow from hence, that the ſurprizing Death of the moſt holy and uſeful Perſons, is no Objection againſt the Providence and Government of God. 'Twas uſual among the Heathens to Accuſe their Gods; yea, ſome of 'em proceeded to deny the Exiſtence and Providence of a *Deity*, becauſe ſome *excellent* and *vertuous* Perſons were taken away by a ſurprizing Death. The *Epicurean*, who diſputes againſt *Providence*, thought his Queries unanſwerable, when he ask'd, Why (if there was a Providence) the two brave *Scipio*'s were Routed and Slain by the *Carthaginians*, with ſeveral ſuch like Queſtions, which were more tolerable in the Gentiles who knew not God; but it is inexcuſable

*Cicer.* de N.D.l.3.

ſable in thoſe who have the Oracles of God committed unto them, to think or ſpeak at ſuch a rate.

2. What Adorable Wiſdom belongs unto the bleſſed God, who can glorifie himſelf by thoſe very Events that ſeem moſt diſhonourable unto him: 'Tis obſerved by the Apoſtle, that *the fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than Men*, 1 Cor. 1. 25. *i. e.* In thoſe very Events which ſeem inconſiſtent with Wiſdom, wherein God ſeems to act fooliſhly, yet in them he (infinitely) ſurpaſſes all the skill and Wiſdom that are in Men. The Divine Wiſdom can build Trophies upon thoſe very places which ſeem to ſwallow it up: The cutting off the Natural Branches, the caſting away the Body of the *Jewiſh* Nation, at the firſt view appear'd diſhonourable unto the Truth and Fidelity of God; but the conſideration of this Event draws from the Apoſtle that admiring Exclamation, *Rom.* 11. *v.* 33. *O the depth of the riches both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God!*

3. How vaſt is the diſtance between the Thoughts of God, and thoſe of Men! *Iſa.* 55. 8. The Subject of the Text gives a memorable Inſtance: The Siſters of *Lazarus* might be apt to conclude that their Brothers Sickneſs and Death would be on various accounts diſhonourable unto Chriſt; 1. As they ſeemed to import Unkindneſs, or Impotence in Chriſt, who on this occa-

ſion carry'd it, as if he either neglected his Friend, or was unable to help him. And 2. As they ſeem'd to argue the unprofitableneſs of Chriſt's Service. When *Lazarus* was Dead and laid in his Grave, thoſe who knew the Friendſhip of the Redeemer unto him, would be tempted to ſpeak on this manner: " How little advantage hath " poor *Lazarus* got by his Acquaintance " with, and Service unto Chriſt, who if he " had Power to Recover and prevent the " Death of his Sick Friend, has been guil- " ty of ſtrange unkindneſs. But in the concluſion, the Sickneſs and Death of *Lazarus* did bring a far greater Honour unto Chriſt, than his recovering would have done. That Miracle which was wrought in raiſing him from the Dead, did exalt the Name of Chriſt, and encreaſed the number of his Followers. Take heed therefore of leaning unto your own underſtanding, but whenever the ways of God have a perplexing obſcurity in them, imitate the Practice of the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 73. 17. Go into the Sanctuary, and view them in Scripture light; this will diſcover a refreſhing brightneſs in thoſe Events, which have the moſt horror in them.

4. How real and great a difference doth Converting Grace make between a Chriſtian, and the unbelieving World! The latter are wholly inſenſible unto the conſiderati-

on us'd in the Text; the Glory of God and Chriſt have no efficacy to quiet and ſupport their Minds. Arguments taken from their own Reputation or Intereſt, have ſome force to moderate Sorrow, and keep it from exceſs; but the glorifying of God by their Croſſes, is an Argument which hath no ſtrength with them; whereas it hath the greateſt with a Chriſtian, to whom nothing elſe need be repreſented: Our Saviour well underſtood to whom he made the Anſwer in the Text; they were his ſincere Diſciples, who were capable of perceiving the force of this Conſideration; which afterward our Saviour repeats unto *Martha*, v. 40. *Thou ſhouldeſt ſee the glory of God:* Unto a *Martha* this ſhould be a grateful and tranſporting ſpectacle, when a *Judas* had far rather ſee Thirty pieces of Silver, (than this glory of God.) Let us try our ſelves by this Rule; this will diſcover our State and our Character, and whether our Patience under Trials be a Chriſtian Grace, or but a Philoſophick Vertue; this latter groweth from other Principles; when therefore our Minds are quieted under dejecting Providences, without having recourſe unto the ſupport of the Text, 'tis a ſad Evidence that we are alienated from the Life of God. If the Conſideration of his *Glory* cannot over-ballance the Pain and loſs that we are expos'd to, we are very unlike to our Redeemer, whoſe troubled Soul was compoſed with this Thought, that his Fathers Name would be glorified by his accurs'd Death, *John* 12. 27, 28.

5. Let us whom this ſorrowful occaſion hath drawn together (and all who but hear of it) give diligence to correſpond with the deſign that God hath in this ſevere Providence. Surely he hath not made this breach, only to open a paſſage unto Sorrow and Compaſſion, much leſs to furniſh us with new Matter of Diſcourſe: No, he deſigns that we ſhould glorifie him in our Hearts and Lives, more than we have formerly done. And this leads me unto that *particular Application* which I propounded to ſpend ſome time in, and which will aſſiſt us in making that Improvement of this Providence as will bring Glory unto God. All that I ſhall add will fall under theſe following Directions.

1. Let us juſtifie this ſevere Providence of God. 'Tis highly diſhonourable unto him when we blame and accuſe his ways, as if they were not equal; as on the other hand 'tis honourable to God, when we ſubſcribe every *Arreſt* that our Heavenly Judge hath pronounc'd. 'Tis related concerning *Aaron*, that when his two Sons were cut off, he held his peace, *Lev.* 10. 2, 3. he made no Objections againſt that tremendous Severity of God, when he underſtood that He

had glorified himſelf by that Act. Bleſſed be God who enableth the *Relict* of the Deceas'd thus to glorifie God. May this Inſtance of his Reſignation very much exalt the Name of God, and bring Reputation unto ſtrict and ſerious Religion. Let this Concluſion be deeply fix'd in all our Souls, that however ſevere the dealings of God are, they are always Righteous and Equal.

2. Let us Honour and Imitate the Holy Example of the Deceas'd Friend of Chriſt, the worthy Mrs. *Shower*. None I hope will expect a large Hiſtorical Account of her Life, or a Funeral Encomiaſtick: This latter ſhe needs not, for her own Works praiſe her in the gate, and are a more valuable Monument, than any made by Art.

Her *Parentage* and *Beauty*, her *Wit* and *Charms* of Converſation (tho' even thoſe were Gifts from above) muſt now be paſs'd over in ſilence; for all theſe are *Præda Mortis*, a Prey unto Death and the Grave; which conſideration ought to cure the undue Eſteem of them, that many profeſſing Chriſtians diſcover. And perhaps, few places are more guilty of this *Unchriſtian Error*, than this City, where it ſeems to be the chief Ambition of many, to out vye others in every thing, rather than in real Holineſs, which is the only Ornament that Death cannot ſpoil us of. Accordingly I ſhall only take notice of thoſe Excellencies which do fit the dignifying Character of *Lazarus* unto her, *One whom Jeſus loved*: (And however uſeful and honourable the Love of our Acquaintance and Fellow-creatures may be unto us, yet at laſt this Character of Sick and dying *Lazarus* will be more valued, than any the moſt admir'd Titles of Honour.) To make good this Character, it will not be neceſſary to Deſcribe her in her Perſonal and Relative Capacities; in both which, thoſe who knew Her will acknowledge that ſhe had not many Equals. 'Twill be enough to draw the few following Lineaments.

1. The Holy Wiſdom which did ſhine in her Conduct, and which ſhe diſcover'd, both in leaving her Native Land, to enjoy the Advantages of Living in a Religious Family (to which ſhe was related,) and in the Choice that ſhe made when ſhe changed her Condition: Neither the prejudices of the Age, or the Advantage of other offers, could hinder from accepting *One*, as the Partner of her Life, from whom ſhe could expect the beſt aſſiſtance in the Service of God, and the concerns of her Soul. And this ſhe did at a time when there was no proſpect of that Tranquillity, which now encourageth Perſons of his Character and Profeſſion.

2. Her Conſcientious Attendance upon the Publick Worſhip: Of this I am capable to give Witneſs, having had the opportuni-

ty of Living a conſiderable time under the ſame Roof; and have obſerv'd how Her Love unto the Solemn Aſſemblies, made Her overcome many Difficulties, which are pleaded by others in excuſe of their neglect; neither the Heat or Cold of the Seaſon, nor the hazard to her Health, (eſpecially when great with Child) could induce her to loſe any Opportunity of waiting at the Gates of Wiſdom; ſuch Advantages were pleaſant, and ſuch Seaſons were refreſhing unto her Soul.

3. The Acquaintance ſhe had with Secret Religion: She was not one of thoſe Profeſſors who ſhut up their Religion within the Temple Walls, where they take it up, and leave it at their departure: No, ſhe made many ſecret Viſits unto her Heavenly Bridegroom, and from him obtain'd that Wiſdom and Modeſty, and other Vertues which adorn'd her Converſation.

4. Her Submiſſion unto the diſpoſing Will of God, and the comforting Hopes ſhe had, do compleat the Character *of one whom Jeſus loved* in this World, and hath now receiv'd in the other, where ſhe is plac'd out of the reach of Sin and Sorrow, of Child-bearing Pains, and Child-bed Sickneſs, and where no Clouds ſhall ever interrupt the Light of God, and of the Lamb. But if we deſire to meet her there, we muſt imitate her Faith and Holineſs: And

3. Laſtly, Let us glorifie God by receiving the Inſtruction which this ſorrowful Providence preſents to us.

1. Concerning the *Uncertainty of Life.* When ſo bright and vigorous a Flame is ſuddenly extinguiſh'd, who can entertain a juſt expectation of a long Life? What Folly muſt it be to reckon upon many years, when our Lives are in ſo perpetual hazard? Let us *number our days aright*, and fix upon our Hearts that Concluſion which *David* made, 1 *Chron.* 29. 18. *Our days on the Earth are as a ſhadow, and there is no abiding*; which conſideration had no queſtion a ſtrong Influence upon that famous Liberality toward the Service of God, which is related in that Chapter; and it would make *us* more active in his Service.

2. Learn the *Vanity of Creature Aſſiſtances*; could the Love of a Husband, or the Counſels of Phyſicians, or the Service of Friends have been effectual, there had not been an occaſion for this ſorrowful Solemnity. 'Tis become Natural to us, to place an undue Confidence in created Helps; exceeding apt we are to truſt in Riches or Wiſdom, and in the Means of Health, when in themſelves they are empty and broken Ciſterns, which will ſend us away diſappointed and aſham'd.

3. The neceſſity of ſpeedy *Preparation* for *Death* and *Judgment*; every Funeral preſſeth

this upon thoſe who are Witneſſes of it. Many of you have lately heard * the Nature and Importance of this great Work, and ſo many have diſcourſed concerning it, that I need not enlarge. It hath not been without a Deſign worthy of the Wiſdom of God, that our Deceas'd Friend ſhould not be called out of the World by Death, until ſhe was known unto two Societies in this City, whereby her Death is rendred more Inſtructive. And now that a Funeral Sermon hath drawn Multitudes to attend here, you will receive no Advantage from it, yea, 'twill prove very hurtful to you, if you do not ſeriouſly engage, that you will give all diligence to prepare for Death and Eternity. This Work is never unſeaſonable; and nothing can be pleaded to excuſe the neglect of it.

You who are *Young*, and in the Flower of your days, do not put off this Affair; ſay not as the negligent *Jews* once did concerning the Rebuilding of their Temple, *The time is not come*, Hag. 1.2. The approach of Death will make you of another Mind, when you hear the ſound of that Meſſengers Feet, who will bring you to Judgment; you will then conclude that this is the *one Thing neceſſary*; that all the Concerns

* From my Br. S. on thoſe words, *Matth.* 24. 44. *Be you alſo ready.*

cerns of Trade, and Offices of Civility, are meer Trifles in compariſon with this Work, upon which your everlaſting Welfare depends. What meaneſt thou then, *O Sleeper!* ariſe and call upon God, and ſtir up thy ſelf that thou periſh not. Look often down into the Chambers of the Grave; dwell (by ſolemn Thoughts) in the Valley of the Shadow of Death: Be not afraid leſt this ſhould make thee Melancholly or Diſtracted, for this Path leads unto the moſt deſirable Joy. Tho' no Diſtractedneſs is to be feared, in compariſon of the *Madneſs* which unrepenting careleſs Sinners are guilty of, and whom Death will find unprepared. And when a view of your Latter End has compos'd and awaken'd your Souls, then put the Queſtion to your ſelves, which you find 2 *Pet.* 3. 2. *Seeing that all theſe things ſhall be diſſolved,* (or *are diſſolving,*) *what manner of Perſons ought we to be, in all manner of Converſation and Godlineſs?*

FINIS.

# Of Mourning for the Dead.

## How far allowable, &c.

By *JOHN SHOWER.*

After the Death of Mrs. *Elizabeth Shower,*
*Auguſt* 24. 1691.

---

FROM

EZEK. XXIV. 16, 17, 18.

*Son of Man, behold, I take away from thee* the Deſire of thine Eyes *with a ſtroke : yet neither ſhalt thou mourn nor weep , neither ſhall thy Tears run down. Forbear to Cry , make no Mourning for the Dead,* &c.

CONſidering what I have formerly preach'd, and publiſh'd for the Aſſiſtance of other Mourners, you will eaſily believe, that ſince the late Providence which occaſions this Diſcourſe, that paſſage of *Eliphaz* to *Job* hath often been ſuggeſted to me, *Chap.* 4. *v.* 3, 4, 5. *Behold thou haſt inſtructed many, and haſt ſtrengthned the weak Hands. Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou haſt ſtrengthned the feeble knees: But now it is come upon thee, and thou fainteſt; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.* Thro' the Mercy of God, I hope, I do not murmur or *faint*; but ſhould it be thought ſtrange, that I am *Troubled*, when the Deſire of mine Eyes is removed by a ſudden ſtroke? Would it not be faulty and provoking, to be otherwiſe affected? to diſregard the Hand of God? deſpiſe his Chaſtening? or be unconcern'd at the Voice of his Rod? How far, and how long, and to what degree to mourn, I confeſs, is a Matter of ſome difficulty: To keep within the Chriſtian Limits, ſo as neither to offend God, nor lay a Stumbling Block before the leſs Judicious, or leſs Candid Obſervers. And of like difficulty is it, rightly to underſtand, and uſe the proper Grounds of Support under ſuch an Exerciſe. For Experience will atteſt, that divers things are wont to be offer'd for our Relief in ſuch caſes, that will by no means adminiſter it; but are weak and ineffectual to any ſuch purpoſe. Tho', thanks be to God, the Goſpel doth not leave us deſtitute of ſufficient Inſtructions, to direct our Mourning, to regulate our Funeral Sorrows, and Suſtain our Souls in an humble ſubmiſſive Adoration of the Divine Good Pleaſure. Some of theſe I ſhall endeavour to recollect, after I have conſidered the extraordinary Inſtance of this Text; where we find the Prophet *Ezekiel* is forbidden by God, to mourn for the death of his Wife; having receiv'd an expreſs Order not to teſtifie his Affection by any of the Funeral Rites, and Cuſtoms of Mourning, uſed among the Jews on the like Occaſion. *Alſo the Word of the Lord came unto me, ſaying, Son of Man, behold, I take away from thee, the Deſire of thine Eyes with a ſtroke, yet neither ſhalt thou mourn or weep, neither ſhall thy Tears run down.* ——

For the better underſtanding of this Paſſage, you muſt know, that this Prophet had for ſeveral years publiſh'd the orders of God, and denounc'd Judgments in his Name, unto *Judah* and *Jeruſalem*; but without the deſired fruit of his Miniſtry, without the ſucceſs of his important Meſſages and Commiſſion. The generality of the People applauded his Rhetorick, but continued to do after the Luſts of their Hearts, and the ſight of their Eyes; and would not hearken to his repeated Calls to Repentance; or be awaken'd by the moſt awful Threatnings of approaching Calamity. Hereupon God reſolves to take another Method, and try if his Sufferings would not be inſtructive unto thoſe, to whom his Preaching had been little ſo. The *Prophet* himſelf ſhould be a *Sign* unto 'em: and the ſurprizing Death of his Wiſe be made a Warning of what God would do againſt that Nation. And his not being permitted to mourn for her, ſhould ſignifie the (a) Extremity of that Judgment, which would quickly overtake them: and repreſent the Horror of their Diſtreſs, that they ſhould not have leave, or Opportunity to perform Funeral Rites, or make a regular mourning for their Dead Relations. The following part of the Chapter declares this to be the general ſcope and meaning of this Paſſage.

Wherein we may conſider, *Firſt*, The *Literal* Sence of the Words, in relation to this Prophet. *Secondly*, The *Parabolical* meaning of them in relation to the People of the Jews. *Thirdly*, The *Practical* Improvement of this Inſtance, as to *Ordinary Caſes*, of the Death of Relations, and Mourning for 'em. The former will tell us what theſe Expreſſions ſignifie in themſelves: the Second what they were deſigned by God to repreſent to the Jews; which will make way for what may be inſtructive from both, whenever God takes away the Deſire of our Eyes, by Sickneſs, or any other ſtroke.

---

(a) *Uxorem nolo lugeas, ut ſignifices in maximis malis non vacaturum Ipſis ut lugeant.* Grotius.

Under the *Firſt Enquiry* we may take notice of three things. 1. The Title here given to the Prophet, *Son of Man.* 2. The Calamity threatned, *Behold, I take away the Deſire of thine Eyes with a ſtroke.* 3. The Prohibition in that caſe, *not to mourn* or *weep*, or uſe the ordinary Expreſſions of Funeral Sorrow.

*Firſt*; This Title, of *Son of Man*, we find given him almoſt an hundred times in this Prophecy. That it ſhould be given him as a Type of Chriſt, who is ſo often called *the Son of Man*, I know no ſufficient reaſon to prove; for that Appellation ſeems to have reſpect to his Mediatory Office, as that true *Son of Man, or promiſed Seed*, who was to bruiſe the *Serpents head*; and not only to be the Saviour of *Iſrael*, but a light to the Gentiles, and allied unto all Mankind: *Unto whom all Power and Authority is given*, and *all Judgment committed, becauſe he is the Son of Man*, Joh. 5. It may either referr to his mean Original and Frailty, as *a Son of Adam*; (whoſe Body was formed out of the duſt of the Ground, and muſt return to it; which might help to prevent his being lifted up by the extraordinary Viſions and Revelations God had favour'd him with:) that he might not think of himſelf above what was meet; *2 Cor.* 12. 7. or count it ſtrange, that he ſhould be called to ſo difficult a Service, and prov'd by ſuch an afflicting Stroke, ſince he was but a Son of *Adam.* Or the expreſſion may (*b*) import no more but ſimply *O man,* which is uſual in all Languages, when a Superior directs his diſcourſe to an Inferior. So *Rom.* 9. 20.

*Secondly,* N. The Calamity threatned by God, *I take away the Deſire of thine eyes with a ſtroke.* By a Plague, or Apoplexy, or ſome very ſurprizing more immediate Hand of God; ſuch as the Firſt-born of the *Egyptians* were ſmitten with, *Exod.* 12. 29. where the word is uſed, *The Deſire,* or * Deſires of *thine Eyes,* as the Septuagint Tranſlation renders it; who this was the eighteenth verſe tells us. *So I ſpake unto the people in the morning, and at Even my Wife died.* 'Tis manifeſtly ſuppoſed that ſhe had many qualifications to render her Deſirable, and make the Loſs exceedingly afflictive: otherwiſe the dreadful Calamity that was coming upon the *Jews* would not have been properly repreſented by it. If the Spirit of God had not reckon'd this Inſtance, to have been one of the moſt ſmarting and afflictive of all private and particular loſſes, it could not have been fitly made uſe of here. If the loſs of a tender Parent, or of a beloved Child, or any other Relation, had been ſuperior or equal to this,

---

(*b*) *Cameronis Prælect. ad* 16 *Matth.* 27.

* Τὰ ἐπιθυμήματα ὀφθαλμῶν.

the Death of ſome or other of thoſe Relations would rather have been mention'd inſtead of this.

It may therefore be thought reaſonable, that when the Inferior Prieſts were forbidden under the Law to *defile themſelves for the Dead*, ſave only for their *neareſt kindred*, *Levit.* 21. 3, 4. that the *Wife* muſt be comprehended, tho' not expreſs'd. Allowance being given them to mourn for a Father or Mother, a Brother or Siſter, a Son or Daughter: This Relation is much more ſuppoſed, for whoſe ſake a Man is to leave all others. It were needleſs to tell him, he might afflict himſelf in that caſe, when it is granted as to the leſſer, and more remote Relatives. The Margin of ſome Bibles would intimate it was forbidden unto a Prieſt, being an Husband among his People, to defile himſelf by Funeral Mourning for his *Wife*; but it may better be read, He ſhall not defile himſelf *for a Chief man*, or Magiſtrate, *among his People*, therefore much leſs might he do ſo for any other, ſave his neareſt Kindred and Relations. The general reaſon of ſuch (*c*) a Prohibition ſeems to have been, to keep up the Reputation and Reſpect due to the Sacred Office and Miniſtry, which by being ordinarily pre-

---

(*c*) Dr. Spencer *de Ritibus Jud. lib.* 1. *cap.* 7. §. 2.

ſent at Funeral Solemnities, might have been leſſen'd; that he might not, (being a publick perſon, and employed about the worſhip of God) by any ſorrowful indecorous Ceremonies, diſparage his Office, or leſſen his Dignity, and eſteem among the *People*: For it follows, *v.* 6. *They ſhall be holy unto their God, and not profane the Name of God*, i. e. They are peculiarly ſeparated for the ſervice of God, and the Offices of Religion, and obliged to greater Strictneſs and Purity than others; it doth not therefore become *them* to do as others on the like occaſions, leſt the honour of God's Name and Worſhip ſhould by that means be abated: For all that were employed about, or aſſiſted at Funerals, by the Ceremonial Law muſt needs be *Unclean*; not only by touching a *dead Body*, but abiding in the ſame *Houſe*, or eating of the Funeral Banquet, *&c. Num* 19. So that if the Prieſts had been allowed to be ordinarily preſent at Funerals, and comply with the uſual Rites and Cuſtoms of Mourning, they muſt either neglect their Sacred Work, or perform ſome part of it with *polluted hands*. And becauſe the *Unclean* were not to converſe with others, till after their *Purification*, this would have been a publick Inconvenience to the People, unto whom by their Office they were to be ſerviceable on all Occaſions. Upon the like reaſon it is required of the *Nazarites*, or ſuch as ſeparated themſelves

ſelves to the Lord by a Vow, *Numb.* 6. 6, 7. He ſhould not make himſelf unclean, no not for his *kindred*, if they die. The Service of God to which he was ſo particularly devoted, was to be preferr'd before any Expreſſions of his Affection to his own Relations. And doubtleſs ſo far as theſe Teſtimonies of our Love to deceaſed Relatives would hinder us from, or in our Sacred Work, even *Miniſters* under the Goſpel are obliged to endeavour to deny themſelves. Which is the principal ground of my not deſiſting from preaching as formerly, any longer than my imperfect Health obliged me to.

*Thirdly*, Here is a *Prohibition of Mourning*, according to the uſual expreſſions of Funeral Sorrow. *Firſt*, It is more generally laid down. *Secondly*, by an Enumeration of ſome of the moſt ſolemn Rites uſed by the Jews on ſuch occaſions. *Bind the Tyre of thine head upon thee, put on thy Shoes upon thy feet, cover not thy Lips, and eat not the bread of Mourners.*

Firſt, The Prohibition is expreſs'd in more general Terms: *Thou ſhalt not mourn, or weep, or let thy Tears run down: forbear to cry, make no mourning for the Dead.* Tho' ſome of the (d) Heathens refuſed to make ſolemn Mourning for their Dead, yet many of them in the Neighbourhood of *Judea*, were very extravagant and Superſtitious in ſuch things. And the Jews, too apt to imitate the Pagan Rites, are often reproved on that Account, and have many particular Inſtitutions of their Law, to prevent their ſymbolizing with the Gentiles, *Lev.* 19. 27. *Chap.* 21. 5. *Deut.* 14. 1, 2. &c. And ſome of the Heathen being immoderate in their *Sorrow* for the *Dead*, may probably be referr'd to, in thoſe Laws of God by *Moſes*, which make the perſons to be *unclean*, who touched a *dead Body*, or came into the *Houſe*, &c. God would put ſuch a note upon it, the better to keep up their Faith, and Hope of the *Reſurrection of the Dead*, which the Cuſtom of exceſſive Mourning might by degrees have leſſen'd.

---

(d) *Valer. Max.* l. 2. c. 6.

The time of Mourning among the Jews was ſometimes longer, ſometimes ſhorter, according to the Dignity and Quality of the Perſon deceaſed. We read of Mourning for the *Dead*, ordinarily *ſeven days*, and ſometimes for a month, or *thirty days*. Among the (e) *Egyptians* for *ſeventy days*, among the (f) *Perſians ſeven*. Among the *Romans* the time of Mourning ordinarily laſted but

Gen. 50. 10.
Deut. 21. 13.
Numb. 20. 29.
Deut. 34. 8.
1 Sam. 31. *ult.*

---

(e) *Diod. Sic.* l. 2. c. 3. 5. *Gen.* 50. *c.* 3. (f) *Herberts Travels*. l. 2. p. 238. For the time and manner of Mourning among the Jews, ſee *Buxtorf.* of Synag. Jud. c. 29. *Steph. Menochio, Oeconomia Chriſtiana*. l. 8. c. 2. *Schickardi Jus Regium Hebr.* c. 6. theor. 19. *Joſeph.* Antiq. Jud. l. 4. c. 8. *Dr. Lightfoot* in *Math.* 19. 23. & Joh. 11. 19 2*d.* Vol.

*Nine* Days; as appears by their *Novendial*, or Nine Days Sacrifices; which they offered to the *Manes* or Ghoſts of the Dead: Tho' (e) ſome of them continued it longer, for *Ten Months*, or a *Year*; which time, on many particular Occaſions, was to be contracted, and afterwards was left to Diſcretion and Inclination.

* But ſaith God, *Thou ſhalt not Mourn, or* W E E P. The Word ſignifies *Weeping with lifting up the Voice.* He muſt not vent his Sorrow, or eaſe his Heart by Tears, or Sighs, or Cries: For it follows, *Forbear to Cry, make no Mourning for the Dead,* i. e. Do not Lament, and Sigh, or lift up thy Voice; but reſtrain and curb thy Sorrows, and all the ordinary Expreſſions of them. There were ſolemn mourning Lamentations among the Jews: Thus for *Joſiah,* 2 Chron. 35. 24. It is threatned againſt *Jehojachim,* that they ſhould not *lament* for him, when he died, *Jer.* 22. 18. ſaying, *Ah! my Brother!* And the contrary promiſed as a Favor to *Zedekiah,* Jer. 34. 5. The firſt ſolemn Lamentation, or Cry, was at the Cloſing of the Eyes, by thoſe who had aſſiſted the Deceaſed, during that laſt Sickneſs: And then by thoſe Relations, unto whom the firſt News came of ſuch

---

(e) Roſin *Antiq. Rom. l.* 5. *c,* 39. Polyd. Virgil, *de Juſtis Parental. l.* 6. *c.* 9, 10.

a Perſon's Death. They lift up their Voice, and with Cries and Tears repeated ſeveral times the Name of the Deceaſed. Thus did *David*, when he received the Tydings of *Abſalom*'s Death: O *my Son*, *Abſalom! my Son, my Son Abſalom! would to God I had died for thee,* O *Abſalom my Son, my Son!* 2 Sam. 18. 33. There was likewiſe a Solemn Lamentation before the Burial, in the preſence of the dead Body, or before the Effigies of it, expoſed in a publick place: Which is called, Mourning *over* the Dead. This the Jews ſhould not be allowed, ſaith God, concerning their own Children *ſlain by the Sword*, Ver. 23. of this Chapter.

It was alſo (*f*) cuſtomary to hire Perſons on purpoſe, who were to act the part of Mourners, artificially to expreſs, and to excite to Sorrow; to provoke and aſſiſt Grief, by their Lamentations, and Funeral Songs. Such we read of, *Jer.* 9. 17. Under the Name of the *Mourning Women*, and *Cunning Women*, and *ſuch as are skilful of Lamentation*, Amos 5. 16. By mournful Poſtures and Actions, tearing their Hair, and beating their Breaſts, forcing Tears, and by doleful Tunes aſſiſting the Sorrow of the Mourning Relations. Theſe Lamentations were often in Verſe; in-

---

(*f*) Joſeph. *de Bell. Jud. l.* 3. *c.* 15. Bellonius *de Mendicato luctu.* Such Women hired to lament at Funerals the *Greeks alſo had.* Plato *de Leg.* Dial. 7.

ſomuch that what we tranſlate to *Lament* and *Wail*, in divers Paſſages may be rendred to *Sing*, Ezek. 32. 18. Mic. 2. 4. *&c.* So *David* wept over *Jonathan* and *Saul*, and *lamented over them*, 2 Sam. 1. 18. and bad them teach the Children of *Iſrael* the *Uſe of the Bow*: Which ſome will have to be a Muſical Inſtrument, uſed on ſuch Occaſions; though it is more probable, that by the *Uſe of the Bow*, he meant to match the *Philiſtines* in Archery, and ſo to be avenged for *Saul's* Death; for by their Archery he was ſlain. Or in general, the Uſe of the *Philiſtines* Arms, whereof the *Bow* was one of the Chief: And in that Song *Jonathan* is commended for his Dexterity in it. Becauſe in the *Old Teſtament* we read of no Muſical Inſtruments made uſe of in Mourning; but 'twas ordinary among the *Gentiles*, of whom the *Jews* did afterward learn it. (g) Accordingly we read of *Minſtrels* in the Ruler's Houſe, on the Death of his Daughter, *Mat.* 9. 23. Which Cuſtom it is ſuppoſed the *Jews* had not, till after *Paleſtine* was ſubject to the *Roman* Empire.

*Secondly*, After the general Prohibition, there is an Enumeration of ſome particular Rites, which, among many others, were wont to be uſed in ſuch Caſes. Several of theſe are mentioned in *Chap.* 27. 29, 30, 31.

---

(g) See Dr. *Lightfoot* in Loc.

One of the ancient (*b*) Writers of the Church, in an Oration concerning the *Macchabees*, brings in their Mother, refuſing and diſclaiming all the ordinary methods of Mourning for her Sons; among which, theſe in the Text are particularly named.

I. *Bind the tire of thine head upon thee.* The Expreſſion of Grief and Sorrow, by the *Hair*, was different, according to what was the Cuſtom of wearing it at other times. And therefore the *Jews*, who were accuſtomed to long Hair, and uſed to tye it up in the Form of a Crown or Mitre; not only for Ornament, but Covering, (*i*) either let it hang looſe, in a time of Mourning, after a careleſs neglected manner; or pluck'd off a good part of it, or caus'd it to be ſhaven. And having made their Heads bare in deep Mourning, did ſometimes throw * *Aſhes* upon their Heads; which mingling with their Tears, diſfigur'd their Countenance, and gave it a rueful Aſpect. Thus *Job*, upon the News of his Childrens Death,

* Job 2. 12.
Joſh. 7. 6.
2 Sam. 1. 2.
Nehem. 9. 1.
Lam. 2. 10.

---

(*b*) οὐ σπαράξομαι κόμην, &c. *Non comam laniabo; non veſtes ſcindam; non carnes unguibus lacerabo; non luctus excitabo; non luctûs ſocias accerſam; non tenebras concludam, ut ipſe quoque aer mecum lugeat; non Conſolatores expectabo; non Panem Lugubrem apponam.* Greg. Nazianzen. 22. *Orat. in Macchab. laudem.*

(*i*) Sopranis *in* Davidem *Commentar. Digreſſ.* 1. *de re Veſtiariâ Jud. Diſp*, 2. *Et Digr.* 2. *de publ. & priv. Luctu.* Mercer. *in* Job 1. 20.

ſhaved his Head, or cauſed his Hair to be cut off, *Chap.* 1. 20. But becauſe the *Jews* were forbidden to imitate the *Heathen* (*k*) in *rounding the corners of their Heads*, &c. *Ezra*, as a Teſtimony of his Sorrow, only pluck'd off ſome of the *Hair* of his *Head*, and of his *Beard*, &c. 9. 3. Thus the *Leper* was obliged to make bare his *Head*, Lev. 13. 45. Hence is † *Baldneſs* ſo often joyn'd with *Mourning* and *Weeping*. *Cut off thine Hair O Jeruſalem! caſt it away, and take up a Lamentation* ——— Jer. 7. 29. *for the Lord hath rejected, and forſaken thee.* The like *Amos* 8. 10. *I will turn your Songs into Lamentations: I will bring Baldneſs upon every Head, and will make it as the mourning for an only Son.* So *Mic.* 1. 16. *O Judea, and Iſrael! make thee Bald, and poll thee for thy delicate Children: enlarge thy Baldneſs as the Eagle, for they are gone into Captivity.* Tear off thy Hair, or ſhave it, and make thy Baldneſs greater than uſual: As the *Eagle*, when ſhe hath loſt her Feathers, as at certain times they do; (*l*) unleſs ſome particular Kind of 'em, that is naturally Bald, be alluded to. But the Prophet is here forbidden to make himſelf Bald, or ſhave his Hair: *Bind the tyre of thine head upon thee.*

† Lev. 10. 6.
Ezek. 7. 18.
Jer. 16. 6.
Chap. 41. 5.

---

(*k*) *Spencer. Ib. l.* 2. *c.* 12, 13. *de lege Tonſuram Orbit. prohibente.*

(*l*) Bochart. *de Animal. part.* 2. *l.* 2. *c.* 1. See more of this Cuſtom, *Geier*, *de Ebræorum luctu. c.* 8. *ſect.* 8.

II. *Put on thy Shoes upon thy Feet.* It was a Token of Sorrow to walk *bare-foot*: As *David*, when he fled from *Abſalom*, and went up the aſcent of *Mount Olivet*, 2 Sam. 15. 30. It was uſed at Funeral (*m*) Solemnities: And 'tis the Cuſtom of the (*n*) Modern *Jews*, when they return from the Funeral of a near Relation, after having taken off their Shoes, to ſit down on the Ground for Seven Days: But ſaith God to the Prophet, *Put on thy ſhoes upon thy feet.*

III. *And cover not thy Lips.* They were wont in deep Mourning to cover the Lip, the Mouth, and the Chin; but eſpecially the Upper-Lip. Sometimes the whole Head; as when *David* wept, and went bare-foot, he alſo covered his Head. The covering of the Face may be meant by ſuch an Expreſſion. Thus we read, *Mic.* 3. 7. *The Seers ſhall be aſhamed, and the Diviners ſhall be confounded; they ſhall all Cover their Lips,* becauſe *there is no Anſwer from God*: becauſe his Providence contradicted their lying Predictions. So the *Lepers* were to cover their Lips; not only to prevent the Contagion of their infectious Breath, but as a Sign of Mourning, *Lev.* 13. 45. *But cover not thy Lips,* ſaith *God* to *Ezekiel.*

---

(*m*) Geir. *Ib. c.* 15.
(*n*) *Cerem. & Cout. des Juifs d'aujourdhuy, p.* 5. *c.* 9.

IV. *Nor eat the Bread of Men*, or the Bread of Mourners, of afflicted, ſorrowful Men, as the word ſignifies. It was cuſtomary among the Jews, to ſend in Proviſions to eat with the neareſt Kindred and Relations of the deceaſed. It was deſigned for the ſolace and refreſhment of the Mourners, who concern'd not themſelves to get their own Food, but had it thus ſent home to 'em. Of this we read *Jer.* 16. 7. *Neither ſhall men tear themſelves for them in Mourning*, or (it may be better rendred) *neither ſhall men break Bread for them in Mourning, to comfort them; neither ſhall men give them the Cup of Conſolation to drink, for their Father, or Mother.* All manner of Food is expreſs'd by Bread, and both the Food, and the Gueſts were all Unclean in ſuch a caſe, *Lev.* 19. 11, 14. which the Prophet alludes to *Hoſ.* 9. 4. *Their Sacrifices ſhall be unto them, as the Bread of Mourners, all that eat thereof ſhall be polluted.* The (*o*) Jews in the *Levant*, and other places, do obſerve the like Cuſtom to this day; and ſend in proviſions to the Houſe of Mourning, every Morning and Evening, for ſeven days together, and ſometimes come and eat with them. Almoſt ſuch a (*p*) Banquet is deſcri-

---

(*o*) *Cerem. & C. des Juifs*, &c. Ib. *du Dueil.*

(*p*) Tho. *Gatakeri Adverſaria. c.* 6.

bed, *Job* 42. 11. when *Job's* Kindred and Acquaintance came to *eat bread with him,* and *to bemoan him.* But ſaith God to this Prophet, Thou ſhalt *not eat the Bread of Men,* not taſte of a Funeral Banquet, or *the bread of Mourners,* as is uſual for others to do.

Accordingly, we find he did not Mourn, or weep, or ſhed a Tear, or lift up a Mourning cry, or cover his Head, or put off his Shoes, or cover his Lips, or eat the Bread of Mourners, or drink the Wine of Conſolation for the Deceaſed, or expreſs any token of Grief. But as he had acquainted the people, that this Calamity ſhould befall him, and this ſhould be his Deportment, the next Morning, he tells them, it was actually come to paſs, and that God had thus forbad him to *Mourn.* Which being ſo unexpected and ſurprizing, could not but put them upon conſidering, what ſhould be the meaning of ſo extraordinary a paſſage, *v.* 18, 19, 25, 26. *So I ſpake unto the people in the Morning, and at Even my Wife died, and I did as I was commanded. And the People ſaid unto me, Wilt thou not tell us, what theſe things are to us, that thou doeſt ſo?* And then he tells them, what God would do againſt 'em, and how they ſhould not be able to uſe the cuſtomary Rites of Mourning, no more than He: *Thus Ezekiel is unto you a ſign,* v. 25. *According to all that he hath done, ſhall you do: And when it comes to paſs, you ſhall know that I* *am the Lord: for I will take from them their ſtrength, the Joy of their Glory, the deſire of their Eyes, and that whereupon they ſet their minds, their Sons and Daughters,* &c.

II. Having conſider'd the literal meaning of this paſſage, as to the Prophet; you muſt know, That how ſevere ſoever this Stroke was to him, thus (to loſe the Deſire of his Eyes, (in that ſudden and ſuprizing manner) it hath a *Typical, Parabolical* meaning; and was deſigned by God, not ſo much (if at all) as a Token of his Diſpleaſure againſt the Prophet, as a ſign of approaching Judgments on the *Jewiſh* Nation. It was uſual with God to inſtruct this People, and the Ten Tribes, by Parabolical Actions, and Examples, as well as by Verbal Meſſages, *Hoſ.* 12. 10. *I have ſpoken by my Prophets, I have multiplied Viſions, and I have uſed Similitudes by the Hands of the Prophets,* i. e. various Emblems, and Repreſentations of my Mind, I have formerly given them: Inſtructive warnings of ſeveral ſorts I have ſent unto them. Thus the Prophet *Iſaiah*, and his Sons were given *for a Sign and Wonder*, to the Houſe of *Iſrael*, from the Lord of Hoſt, *Iſa.* 8. 8. their very Names were Prophetical, and Significative of future Events, *Ch.* 7. 3. and 8. *Ch.* 3. 4. Thus *Iſaiah* walk'd barefoot three years for a ſign, and a wonder to *Egypt* and *Ethiopia*, to repreſent the Captive miſerable condition they should be brought into, *Iſai.* 20. 3. He went abroad without his upper Garments, after the manner of * Priſoners and Slaves, for men are ſaid to be *naked*, when they are ill clad, *Job.* 22. 6. we read of *ſtripping the Naked of their cloathing*. Captives and Mourners are likewiſe wont to put off their upper Garments, 2 *Sam.* 15. 30. *Jer.*2.25. Thus was he to walk for three Years, to denote the duration of that Calamity.

* 1 Sam.19.24. 2 Sam. 6. 20.

This Prophet *Ezekiel* was likewiſe to give an Emblem of that Judgment the *Text* referrs to, by the removal of his ſtuff, *&c Chap.* 12. 15, 16, 17. digging through a Wall, as if a Watch had been ſet at the door, and all ordinary Paſſages block'd up; to ſignifie the Extremity of their diſtreſs, when every one will be willing to put a helping hand. He was to bear it on his Shoulders, as Servants that carry Burdens, to repreſent the Servitude and Slavery to which the Jews ſhould be reduc'd. And this in the Evening, or Twilight, to denote the ſtealing away of the King, Nobles, and Men of War, by Night, 2 *Kings* 25. 4. He was to cover his face, that he ſhould not ſee the ground, as fill'd with ſhame, and unwilling to be known: Thus was He to be *a Sign* unto the houſe of *Iſrael*: for the ſignification of this refers to them of *Jeruſalem*, whoſe Deſolation and Captivity was now at hand. Which Calamity, ty, they, who were already Captives in *Babylon*, had eſcaped, *v.* 9. *This Burden concerned the Prince of Jeruſalem, and of all the houſe of Iſrael, that were among them.* As the Prophet had done, ſo ſhould it be done unto them. And accordingly it came to paſs, for the King *Zedekiah* eſcap'd out of *Jeruſalem* with a burden on his Shoulders, as if he were ſome common and ordinary Perſon, digging thro' a Wall, and eſcaping in the Twilight; but is taken by his Enemies, his Sons ſlain before his face, and his own Eyes put out, and he is led into Captivity, and there remains a Priſoner till he Dies. In this was *Ezekiel* unto them *a Sign*.

He was ſo likewiſe by this Paſſage in the Text, which was one of the laſt Prophetick warnings before the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and the laſt great Captivity of *Judah* and *Benjamin* by *Nebuchadnezzar* (*q*). It was within two years of it. And 'tis obſervable, that the tenth Month, and the tenth day of the month, when this Prophet, (a Captive then in *Babylon*,) received this Meſſage from God, at the ſame time, the ſame Day of the month, *Nebuchadnezzar* began to lay ſiege to *Jeruſalem*. Within two Years after this, is the

2 King. 25. 1.
Jer. 50. 3.
ch. 52 .4, & 1.

---

(*q*) See *Joſ.* Antiq. *Jud.* l. 10. c. 10. *Jac. Uſſeri Cronol. Sacra*, &c.

laſt great Captivity and Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem.* The *three hundred ninety days* for the Houſe of (*r*) *Iſrael,* mentioned *Ezek.* 4. 5. ſome think now to be Accompliſhed. (*ſ*) This was above a hundred and thirty Years after the Deſtruction of *Samaria,* and the Ten Tribes, by *Salmanaſſer* King of *Aſſyria.* At the very time when the Siege began, he is told of it by God; and by the Parable of the death of his Beloved Wife, he informs the People of the approaching Deſtruction of their City, and Temple, which was the Deſire and Delight of their Eyes: For then God ſuffer'd the *Chaldeans* to defile and deſtroy the Temple, the Holy and Beautiful Houſe, where their Fathers praiſed God, was burnt with Fire, and all their Pleaſant things laid waſte. As it is lamented by the Prophet *Jeremy, Lam.* 2. 7. *And your Sons and your Daughters,* ſaith God, *who are the Deſire of your Eyes, ſhall fall by the Sword, and ſhall periſh with my polluted Sanctuary.* For thus he explains this paſſage in the 24, 25, *verſes* of this Chapter. Thus *Ezekiel is unto you a Sign: according to all that he hath done ſhall you do, and when this cometh, ye ſhall know that I am the Lord God. Alſo thou*

---

(*r*) See Contin. of Mr. Pool's Annot. upon the place.

(*ſ*) See *Derodon, Lumiers de la Raiſon,* trait. 2. Ch. 7.

*Son of Man, ſhall it not be in the day, when I take from them their Strength, the joy of their glory, the deſire of their Eyes, and that whereupon they ſet their minds, their Sons and their Daughters?* You ſhall do as I have done, you ſhall not be able to make a regular Mourning, you ſhall not cover your lips, nor eat the Bread of Men, you ſhall not make any ſolemn Lamentations, or Funeral Solemnities for your dead Relations: So perplexing will be your diſtreſs, and ſo great the multitude of the ſlain. But you ſhall pine away in your Iniquities, and tho' you ſhall mourn inwardly, (and have Cauſe enough to do ſo) you ſhall not dare to ſhew it, for fear of the *Chaldeans.* As is foretold by another Prophet, *Jer.* 16. 6, 7. *Both the great and the ſmall ſhall dye in this Land, they ſhall not be buried, neither ſhall men lament for them, nor cut themſelves, nor make themſelves bald for them. Neither ſhall men tear themſelves for them in Mourning, to comfort them for the Dead, neither ſhall men give them the Cup of Conſolation to drink, for their Father, or for their Mother.*

Thus *Ezekiel* was to be a Sign unto them; for tho' God removed from him one of the moſt valuable Bleſſings that could be, yet the Stroke was not ſo ſevere and afflictive unto the Prophet, but the Calamity ſignified by it, to come upon the Jews, was much more dreadful.

God had long and often admoniſh'd them to repent; but they ſlighted his Meſſages, and hated and perſecuted thoſe that brought them, deſpiſing the Remedies, and Phyſicians too; ſo that at length he reſolves to ſpare them no longer, and forbids his Prophet to pray for them any more, *Jer.* 7. 16. *Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry, nor pray for them, neither make interceſſion to me, for I will not hear thee.* He had charged them at the 4. verſe not to truſt in lying words, ſaying, *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are theſe:* not to put confidence in the Flatteries of the falſe Prophets, who told them that this City ſhould not be deſtroyed, nor this people go into Captivity, becauſe of their particular relation unto God, above all other Nations of the Earth, and becauſe of his ſpecial preſence in the Temple; theſe were but *lying words*, which would deceive them. For ſince they had *polluted his Sanctuary*, turned the *Houſe of Prayer into a Den of Thieves*, God would even conſume his own Houſe, and (*t*) ſuffer it to be burnt with Fire, its Walls to be broken down, and the Veſſels of Gold and Silver, and Braſs, with all its Treaſure and coſtly Furniture, to be carried to *Babylon:* Their Feaſt-Days, and

---

(*t*) See Mr. *Lee*'s *Solomon*'s Temple, chap. 10.

New-Moons, Sabbaths, and Solemnities, all to ceaſe; and the very place where the Temple once ſtood in its Beauty and Glory, to become the (*u*) Dunghill of another City, call'd *Elia.* And to render this probable, he bids them conſider the ruine of *Shilo*, ver. 12. *Go unto my place in Shilo, and ſee what I have done to my houſe there, for the wickedneſs of my people Iſrael*, 1 Sam. 4. 11. Pſal. 78. 61. How God forſook his Tabernacle, and deliver'd his ſtrength into Captivity; how he gave his people to the Sword, and was wroth with his Inheritance, &c. *Shilo* was a City belonging to the Tribe of *Ephraim*; where, before the building of *Solomon*'s Temple, the Ark had its uſual Reſidence, tho' occaſionally removed ſometimes. The *Ark* of the Teſtament, which contained the *two Tables of the Law*, and ſo teſtified their Covenant-relation: The *Ark*, which was the Glory, and the Strength of *Iſrael*, the *Symbol* of God's Preſence with them, and the Terror of their Enemies; for the Seat of God was between the Cherubims, which was over the Ark, where he promiſed to meet, and commune with his people, *Exod.* 25. 21. Before it Sacrifices were offer'd; 1 *Sam.* 6. 14. And when it ſet forward in the Wilderneſs, *Moſes* ſaid,

---

(*u*) *Sterquilinium Urbis novæ.* Hieronym. *in* Iſa. 64. whereof S. *Jerom.* was an Eye-witneſs.

*Ariſe, O Lord, and let thy Enemies be ſcattered*; and when it reſted, he ſaid, *Return, O Lord, to the many Thouſands of Iſrael*, Numb. 10. 35. But after the Land of *Canaan* was ſubdued, the *Ark* was lodg'd in *Shilo*, being removed from thence into the *Iſraelites* Camp, 1 *Sam.* 4. When in the Fight againſt the Philiſtines, *Ely*'s Sons were ſlain, the Ark was taken, and *Iſrael routed:* And afterwards it was removed to another Tribe for the wickedneſs of *Iſrael*, (*viz.*) from *Ephraim* to *Judah*, from *Shilo* to the Temple at Mount *Sion:* which very Temple, with the Ark it ſelf, God here reſolves to deſtroy, for the Iniquity of the Houſe of *Judah*. And to aſſure the Prophet that he would not alter his Purpoſe, he forbids him to *pray* againſt it. Now leſt the People ſhould take it ill, that he did not uſe his utmoſt endeavours to hinder this Calamity, or leſt the Prophet himſelf ſhould be diſcouraged, by praying to no purpoſe; God condeſcends to double and treble the Prohibition: *Not to pray, not to lift up a Cry, not to make Interceſſion*; *for*, ſays he, *I will not hear*, q. d. I will not repent of my denounced Vengeance: I will not be diverted from that Deſtruction, I have reſolv'd to inflict; neither ſhall the Interceſſion of any Others for them be prevalent and effectual. There are ſix eminent Perſons mentioned by name, *Jeremiah, Moſes, Samuel, Noah, Job* and *Daniel*, yet neither of them ſingly, nor all of them together, ſhould prevail, by their Interceſſions, to preſerve *Jeruſalem*, or deliver the *Jews* from this Captivity into *Babylon*, Jer. 15. 1. Ezek. 14. 16, 18, 20.

A few Verſes before this Text will manifeſt this reſolv'd Purpoſe of God, concerning this Matter. *Ver.* 13, 14. *In thy Filthineſs is lewdneſs: becauſe I have purged thee, and thou waſt not purged, thou ſhalt not be purged from thy filthineſs any more, till I have cauſed my fury to reſt upon thee: I the Lord have ſpoken it, it ſhall come to paſs, and I will do it: I will not go back, neither will I ſpare, neither will I repent; according to thy ways, and according to thy doings, ſhall they judge thee, ſaith the Lord God.* *q. d.* Think not that my Prophets have invented a ſad Story of their own, and denounced Judgment without my Warrant; for it is *I the Lord have ſaid it.* They did only reveal my Purpoſe, and declare my Counſel; I will do according to their Prediction: I that ſent them, will moſt aſſuredly bring it to paſs. And think not that this Judgment is a great way off, and you need not be concern'd for any thing at ſuch a Diſtance; for *it ſhall ſhortly come to paſs*, it is even at Hand. And think not that your Fortreſſes, and Strong-Holds ſhall be your Defence; that your City is impregnable againſt the force of the *Chaldean* Army; that the King of *Babylon* is too weak and impotent to prevail againſt *Jeruſalem*; for *I my ſelf will do it*: I have Commiſſion'd him to perform my Pleaſure, and I will aſſiſt him to execute my Threatning: And flatter not your ſelves, that my Purpoſe may alter, and I may be intreated to delay for ſome time, for *I will not go back*, or *ſpare you any longer*: Do not imagine, that becauſe I have formerly been intreated *to Repent*, I may now be ſo again; for it is added, *I will not Repent*: And it is but juſt and equal I ſhould thus reſolve; for *according to thy ways and doings thou ſhalt be judged, ſaith the Lord.* And then in the Text he hath a *Sign* of all this, by the Death of his neareſt Relation, the *taking away the deſire of his Eyes with a ſtroke.*

III. Having conſidered this Paſſage, as to the *Literal* and *Parabolical* ſence of it, what the Expreſſions ſignifie in themſelves, and what they are deſigned to repreſent to the *Jews*; let us now conſider how far they are *Applicable* to us in ordinary Caſes. For when God removed from the Prophet *Ezekiel* the *deſire of his Eyes*, he forbids him to *mourn* or *weep*: But from ſuch an extraordinary Caſe, which had ſo plain a deſign, and direct reference to the Jewiſh Nation, we cannot argue againſt all *Mourning for the Dead*, or Expreſſions of Sorrow, when a Delightful and Beloved Relation is taken from us. No: *Mournings* and *Lamentations* are allowed, and commendable, if we keep within the Bounds of Reaſon and Religion. It is a piece of Juſtice to the Deceas'd, to Bewail them. It is threatned as a Judgment, *Jer.* 21. when any Die without being Lamented: Yea, it is ſaid to be *the Portion of the wicked from God, and the Heritage of the Oppreſſor, that they are cut off, and their Widows ſhall not weep,* Job 27. 13, 14, 15.

Holy *Abraham* we find Lamenting and Weeping when *Sarah* died; (who is the firſt Woman whoſe *Burial* is mentioned in Scripture, and the only Woman, the number of whoſe Years are accounted there.) Tho' he had paſs'd many Difficulties before, and met with many Temptations, and been tried with many Conflicts, as leaving his Country, hazarding his Life, obliged to baniſh one beloved Son out of his Houſe, and commanded to ſacrifice another with his own hands; yet we do not read of his *mourning* and *weeping*, till the Death of his beloved *Sarah*, Gen. 23. 1, 2. Neither is he here or any where condemned for dropping a Tear upon this Occaſion.

But our great concern, in ſuch Caſes, is to keep within Bounds; as upright *Job*, who rent his Cloaths, and ſhaved his Head, and fell upon his Face to the ground, when he heard the News of his Childrens Death; and yet even there he worſhipp'd God, and had this Teſtimony, That *in all this he ſinned not, or charged God fooliſhly*; Job 1. 22. For Mourn we may, and Weep we may, and Lament we may, but not with an undue Violence, as

*David* for *Abſalom*, 2 Sam. 18. 33. Nor as *Rachel* for her *Children*, who refus'd to be *comforted*: Or as *Rizpah*, who attended the Carcaſſes of her Sons, and would not be parted from them, 2 *Sam.* 21. 10: Or as *Jacob*, when *Joſeph* was miſſing, who will go *down to the Grave to his Son mourning*, Gen. 37. 35. Or as *Jonah*, when God *ſmote his Goard*, and *made it wither*, Jonah, 4. 8. His Spirit droopt, and he reſolves to *die* too.

If God takes aways the Joy of our Heart, and *Deligbt of our Eyes*; (ſuch Relations as he made *ſo*, one that *from* him, and *by* him, and in Subordination *to* him, was ſo;) we muſt not yet forget our Relation to God; we muſt not over-look the Deſigns of his Providence, or the Encouragements of his Word; we muſt not Mourn as Ignorant, Hopeleſs Heathens, that never ſaw the Bible, or heard of Chriſt.

I ſhall therefore comprize what I have to ſay as to this Occaſion, under *Two Generals*: The one of *Duty*, the other of *Support*, whenever God takes away the *deſire of our Eyes with a ſtroke.*

*Firſt*, We are call'd, in ſuch a Caſe, to conſider upon what Grounds, and with what Deſign, and for what Ends, it pleaſeth God thus to Afflict and make a Tryal of his Servants. And thereby we may learn, in what manner we ought to Regard and Improve ſuch Diſpenſations. This will concern the Duty of thoſe who are thus exerciſed.

*Secondly*, As to *Support* and *Comfort*, for the Prevention of immoderate Sorrow and Mourning; I ſhall conſider what is proper and ſufficient to bear up a Chriſtian Spirit in ſuch Caſes; and withal take notice how vain, and ineffectual are all the little Conſiderations which ſome are wont to offer, and others to have recourſe to, for Encouragement under ſuch Tryals, without going into the Sanctuary, and conſulting the Holy Oracles.

*Firſt*, When the like Caſe doth happen, as it may to the beſt of Men, we are to conſider upon what *Righteous Grounds*, and with what *Merciful Deſigns*, God doth thus afflict and prove any of us; or may do ſo, if as yet He hath not. Though God had imparted his ſecret Counſels to this Prophet, and employ'd him in the moſt Honourable, Noble, and Excellent Work; though he had been true to his Commiſſion, and faithfully delivered the Meſſages he received; pleading the Cauſe of God with undaunted Courage and Reſolution, notwithſtanding the Hatred, and Perſecution, and Hazard of his Life, whereunto his Fidelity expos'd him; yet God thinks fit by ſuch a *ſtroke* as this, to Afflict and Prove him, and make him a Sign and a Warning to others.

We ſhould not therefore wonder, as if ſome ſtrange and new thing hath happened to us, when God takes from us our moſt deſirable Relations: If he remove our deareſt Comforts, and that with very little warning: If he wound and ſmite us in the Apple of our Eye; and pluck from our Embraces that, which of all Earthly Bleſſings our Heart is moſt ſet upon: We ought not in ſuch Caſes to ſay, with *Gideon*, Judg. 6. 13. *If the Lord be with us*, (if he accept us, if he favours us,) *how is it*, and *why is it, that this evil hath befallen us?* As if God were obliged to gratifie us in all our Wiſhes: As if he were bound to take nothing from us that we are unwilling to part with, though it be his own, more than Ours.

My Brethren, I find it to be no ſuch eaſie matter, in practical Inſtances, to reconcile the Belief of God's gracious Preſence with ſmart and preſſing Afflictions. We are ready to ſay with the Siſters of *Lazarus*, *Lord, if thou hadſt been here, my Brother had not died.*

If the Lord were with us, it would have been otherwiſe; we are all too prone to think and ſay ſo. Such are our miſtaken Apprehenſions concerning God, under the Darkneſs of our Preſent ſtate: Such is our inordinate Eſteem and Affection for Temporal Bleſſings: So Ignorant or Inconſiderate are we about the Deſign and End of

God in Afflicting us: So little do we underſtand, or conſider that great Revenue of Glory which God may bring to himſelf by our ſmarteſt Tryals: So apt are we to look back on the Comforts we have loſt, and let our Thoughts looſe to aggravate our preſent Wants, by reviewing the Advantages we once enjoy'd, and are now deprived of: So partially, ſo ſlightly, ſo ſeldom do we contemplate the Nature and Tenure of the Covenant of Grace, which does ſuppoſe, and make allowance for ſuch Viſitations, and hath provided for our Relief under them: And ſo it comes to paſs, that we are too ready to queſtion his Fatherly Love, by reaſon of ſuch Rebukes: Not conſidering that *whom the Lord loves, he chaſteneth*, and *ſcourgeth every Son whom he receiveth*, Heb. 12. 6. But the Uſefulneſs and Neceſſity of ſuch Providences, and the Wiſdom and Faithfulneſs of God therein, may be made conſpicuous to a conſidering Mind: And it is frequently acknowledged by the Experience of thoſe who are exerciſed in this kind, That it is no more than is needful, that we ſhould ſometimes be in heavineſs by ſuch Diſpenſations: As will appear by conſidering a few *things*.

*Firſt*, Such Providences are proper to Awaken *Repentance*, for our many Omiſſions and Failings, in the Relation we ſtood to them whom God hath taken from us. How ſeriouſly ſhould we reflect, Did I diſcharge the Duty of my Place to ſuch, or ſuch a deceaſed Relative? Did I value and prize ſuch a Mercy as I ought? Did I thankfully Improve ſuch a Bleſſing as I might? It is our fault and folly, as well as our Unhappineſs, that we ſeldom know how to prize and uſe ſuch Mercies, till God hath depriv'd us of them. And that Neglect is no way to be retriev'd, but by a penitent ſenſe of our Error, in compliance with the Call of God: That Call of God, I mean, which he gives us by their Removal. And it is part of the Wiſdom of God's Government, to order our Tryals and Afflictions, for the kind, for the manner, and for the ſeaſon of them, as may beſt ſerve to convince us of our Sin, and promote our Repentance.

For Example, *Children* ſhould conſider upon the Death of *Holy Parents*, in what Inſtances they failed of hearkning to their Counſels, and following their Inſtructions, Admonitions, and Examples; of paying that Honour, Reverence, Duty, and Obedience which God commands. They ſhould *then* remember, conſider, and mourn to think how often their Miſcarriages, againſt God, and them, was a Grief and Burthen to their Souls, and made them walk ſoftly: They ſhould recall the Vanity of their Childhood, and review the Stubbornneſs, and Frowardneſs, and Intractableneſs of Youth; and the many particular Provocations they were guilty of while their Parents lived; againſt their frequent Reproofs, againſt the cry of their Prayers, and the meaning of their Tears, againſt their many Warnings, and Compaſſionate Calls to Repentance, againſt all the methods God uſed to awaken, humble, and reform them: Is not this the voice of ſuch a Rod to many Children, when their godly Parents are taken away by Death? And the like Reflections ſhould *Parents* make, when God removes their Grown Children; whether they have anſwered their Truſt, and been faithful to their Souls; ſolemnly dedicating them to God, endeavouring to inſtruct them in the Principles of Religion, and Educate them in the Chriſtian Faith, and ſave them from the Temptations of the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil; endeavouring by all means to make Religion aimable, and Sin odious, and practical Godlineſs Lovely, by their own Circumſpect walking, by keeping up the Authority of God, and his daily Worſhip in their houſes, by faithful Inſtructions, and prudent, ſeaſonable Reproofs, and fervent Holy Prayer to God for them, and with them, *&c.*

The like for other Relations, when *the Deſire of our Eyes* is removed, as a Dear Husband, or a beloved Wife. God expects we ſhould reflect, and conſider, whether we enter'd into ſuch a Relation, as becomes Chriſtians, *marrying in the Lord*: Whether we did walk as Heirs of the Grace of Life together: whether by tenderneſs and Affection, by Meekneſs and Wiſdom, by Watchfulneſs and Prayer, by Counſel and other Aſſiſtance, we faithfully performed the Duty of that Relation. We ought to reflect in ſuch caſes, How much more good we might have received, and done, with reference to the Deceas'd: How much more we might have contributed than we did, to the furtherance of their Grace and Holineſs, their Knowledge and Comfort, their peace of Conſcience, and meetneſs for Heaven; or what Advantage and Increaſe of *our own*, we might have had by their means, and did not improve. You that are now Happy in one anothers Affection, remember this, before a parting time do come: for ſuch Thoughts as theſe will be apt to follow us, under ſuch Providences; and it is fit they ſhould.

And if we have the warning of their Approaching Change by *Sickneſs*; it may then be proper to Reflect, how we then demean'd our ſelves, whether we were duly ſenſible of it? what was the Temper of our Spirits in Prayer for them; and what our carriage and deportment toward them, and toward God, with Relation to their caſe: How far we expected and prepared for a Separation by Death? what ſolemn acts of Reſignation of them, and of our ſelves, to the Will of

God, our Spirits were formed to? what impreſſions their Sick-bed Diſcourſes, their Dying Speeches, Comforts, or Counſels, with their laſt Agonies, had upon us? what Duty lyes upon us at ſuch a time, in reference to theſe things, is ſufficiently obvious: But how far we then comported with it, ought ſeriouſly to be inquired, when God hath removed them by Death; that wherein we have failed, we may be awaken'd to *Repent*, which is *one Deſign* of God by ſuch a Stroke.

*Secondly*, To teſtifie his Diſpleaſure for our fond *Inordinate Affections*, to thoſe Relatives he ſnatcheth from us, and to prevent the like as to thoſe that ſurvive.

God is Jealous of his Honour, and he will not bear a Rival: and if the *Deſire of our Eyes* lay too near our Hearts, and rob him of our Delight, and Love, and Time, no wonder if he make a Separation. When *Jacob's* Affection to his *Joſeph* and *Benjamin* were ſo exceſſive, that his Life was bound up in theirs, *he* and *his* muſt then be parted: And the good old Man be brought to ſay, with a doleful Accent, and aking Heart, *Joſeph is not, and Simeon is not, and muſt Benjamin go too? all theſe things are againſt me.* A Husband, a Wife, a Mother, a Father, a Child, a Friend which is as thy own Soul; Any of them, all of them muſt go, *if we Love them too well*, i. e. if we value them too highly; if we delight in them exceſſively; if we rejoyce in them more than in the preſence of God; if we place the ſatisfaction of our Minds, the ſolace of our Lives, too much in their Company; if we love them not, *only* in the Lord, or in ſubordination to him; if we reckon upon too much Content in their Continuance; if we are too unwilling to part with them at the Call of God, *&c.*

This we may be ſure of, God will break that from us, from which we would not be broken, or turn it to our Croſs. And that *Stroke* which makes the breach, ſhould teach us to moderate *our Affections* to ſurviving *Friends*; to Poſſeſs, Enjoy, and Uſe all things and perſons in this World, *as if we uſed them not, becauſe the time is ſhort, and the faſhion of the World paſſeth away*, 1 Cor. 7. 31. That we may be brought to ſpeak it as the inward ſence of our very Hearts: *Lord*, I ſee all Earthly Comforts are withering Gourds: How quickly, how eaſily, how ſuddenly are they gone! O let me henceforward, make *Thee* my only Portion and Treaſure; let me ſeek thy Favour, value thy Love, prize thy preſence, in and above all things: Thou art the only Fountain of *Living Waters*; All Creatures are but broken Ciſterns, that can hold little or none; and how unexpectedly may they be dry'd up! *Whom have I in Heaven but thee?* and who, or what is there *deſireable on Earth beſides thee?*

Happy is that Soul who Anſwers this Deſign of God, and is brought to this frame by ſuch a ſtroke.

*Thirdly*, God may ſometimes intend to Try our Sincerity, and Improve our Truſt in him alone. To know what is in our Hearts, *i. e.* To let it be known unto our ſelves and others, whether we can love him as a Father, though we feel his Rod: Whether we can ſtoop to his Diſpoſing Authority, and ſubmit to his Hand, when it is moſt heavy: and acquieſce in his Orders, when they are moſt ſevere. To try whether we can *receive Evil from God, as well as Good:* and bleſs him for Taking, as well as Giving: To try whether we can truſt him, though he ſlay us; and ſay with *Hezekiah, Good is the Word of the Lord*, even when he calls for the *Deſire of our Eyes.* To try whether we can believe his Word, truſt his Providence, and depend upon his Care, and hope for his Salvation, when the Helps, and Aſſiſtances, and Inſtruments of his Mercy, which we formerly had, are withdrawn. In a word, whether God *alone* be enough for our Souls to live upon; and be reckon'd ſufficient for our Stay, Support, and Strength, whatſoever Diſappointments, Loſſes, and Difficulties we meet with. Whether we will abide by our Agreement, when we firſt yielded our ſelves to the Lord, to be abſolutely diſpos'd of, as well as rul'd by him. And how often have we ſince renew'd that Covenant, and given up our ſelves and ours to the Lord: He will try by ſuch Providences, whether we are ſatisfied he ſhall take us at our word.

*Fourthly*, Sometimes he does it as a Preparative for *Patience* under further *Tryals*, either *Perſonal* and particular, or publick and *National*. God in Wiſdom inures our Spirits to a ſuffering State, and brings us off by degrees from the Love of this World. He trains us up in Self-denying Exerciſes, that we may be the better prepared to meet him in the way of his Judgments: That by Suffering, we may learn to ſuffer. He takes away ſomewhat which we dearly loved, that it may be leſs difficult for us to part with the Remainder: That our proud Hearts being humbled, and our ſtubborn Wills bowed, we may be more ready to bear, and ſuffer, and loſe, as he ſhall think fit. We need be inſtructed a good while in the School of Affliction, perfectly to learn Patience, and Reſignation to the Will of God. So difficult a Leſſon as that of *Self-denial*, will not be learned all at one time. *One* Inſtance of a calm Submiſſion to the Divine Will, may diſpoſe us for *another* that is more difficult; for if we cannot give up our *Relations* to the Will of God, how ſhall we be able to reſign *our Selves*? If the Foot men tire us, how ſhall we contend with

Horſes? If we can't part with the Life of a *Friend* we love, how ſhall we ſurrender our *Own*, if he ſhall call us to do ſo? If we ſend up our impatient Murmurs to Heaven, when any of them die, (though it be peaceably on their Beds,) how ſhall we be able to reſiſt unto Blood? or to die at a Stake, if that ſhould ever become our Duty? If the Calamities common to Men be ſo heavy for our Shoulders, what ſhall we do in a Fiery Tryal? Therefore God in Wiſdom remembers our Ignorance and Frailty, and conſiders our Weakneſs, and accordingly he trains up, and prepares us by degrees.

*Fifthly*, The Laſt and General Reaſon of all ſuch *Strokes*, is to mind ſurviving Relations and Acquaintance, and all that hear of it, *to prepare to follow*. All the frequent Warnings of God, which you have lately had of this kind, ſpeak very loudly the Language of our bleſſed Lord, *Mat.* 24. 44. *Be ye alſo ready*. Conſider your Latter End; Number your Days; Know that you haſten to an Eternal State: Some of *us* eſpecially ſhould take the Warning, unto whom the Blow comes nearer home. When Death enters into the very Houſe where we ſojourn; and leſſens or diſſolves our Families; when God draws away the Veil, and expoſes the Picture of Death naked to our view, and holds it before our Eyes; he bids *us*, of all others, make haſte with our Work, and be ready; and not fooliſhly flatter our ſelves, that we have many Years to come in this World. Do we not ſee our own Friends and Relations, that were more likely to live than we, Month after Month, drop into the Grave? And *is it not the Houſe appointed for all the Living?* Shall we not think our own Turn is coming? May not Thine be next, or Mine next? Does not every deceaſed Friend tell us, we are living-dying Perſons, who ſhall ſhortly follow them, but they not return to us: Their Seats and Places, here and at home, ſhall henceforth know them no more? And will it not e're long be as certainly true of us, of every one of us, as true as if our Breath were gone, and our Eyes cloſed, and our Teeth ſet, and our Friends had left us, as if we were laid in the Graves, and the Funeral Ceremonies were over, and our Bodies cover'd with the Bones and Earth that muſt be our Company in the houſe of Darkneſs? Oh that we were wiſe to underſtand, and believe this, and conſider our Latter End! Thus concerning the Duty of Mourners.

II. For the Prevention of *Immoderate Sorrow*, and Irregular Mourning, which is next to be conſidered: I deſire it may be obſerv'd, that many perſons ſeek for Comfort in ſuch Caſes, where it is not to be had; and hope to encourage and ſupport themſelves from weak, miſtaken, or deceitful Principles: we are apt to lean on ſome broken Reed, that will not ſuſtain but pierce us. Under this and the other Leaf we ſeek for Conſolation, and find a Serpent lurking there; but all our turnings of devices prove but like the Potters Clay, which breaks and moulders between our Fingers: We would fain draw the Water of Comfort out of this Brook, or the other Puddle, inſtead of going to *Jacob's* Well, the true and only Fountain: I mean, inſtead of conſulting the Holy Scriptures. We diſquiet our Minds in vain, ſtretch our Imaginations, and buſie our inquiring thoughts, to find out Remedies againſt the Evils we ſuffer, but till we go into the Sanctuary, we ſearch in vain.

All the Precepts and Inſtructions of Philoſophers are weak, and ineffectual to a Chriſtian. To change the Nature of Afflictive Evils, or wholly to extirpate our own Affections, will be found impoſſible: Fatal Neceſſity aſſerted by ſome, and the Doctrine of Contingency and Chance, explained by others, will not quiet or ſatisfie an Afflicted Mourner.[*] To ſay we ſhould have conſtantly expected this, and the like Calamity before hand, is in ſome ſence true; but does not that inflict as much of the Evil before, as it takes off afterward? For ſuch[*] a Fore-ſight and Expectation cannot be without Anxiety, and many ſad and melancholly thoughts; I mean, upon Principles meerly Philoſophical, it cannot. And therefore it is a Diſputable point among that ſort of men, whether it be beſt to be ſurprized by an Evil, or to pre-meditate and foreſee its Approach. Both grant we are condemned to be miſerable. Think upon it before-hand, ſays the one Sort, that you may feel it the leſs: Never think of it before, ſays the other, with equal Reaſon, that you may not feel it twice.

---

[*] Parker's *Demonſt. of the Law of Nat.* part 1. §. 28.

But others more plauſibly, and with ſome Weight, will be ready to ſay, You knew a *Parting-Time* muſt come: You knew the Matrimonial Union might eaſily, and ſuddenly be diſſolved and broken by Death. What did you not know, that you and your Relations muſt Die? or did you not live together with this deſign, to help and prepare one another for Death? And the Providence of God continued ſuch a ſuitable Relation to you for ſo many years: might he not have made this breach ſooner? you ought to be thankful for ſuch a Bleſſing ſo long.

Beſides, it may be added as to the *manner* of their Deceaſe, they had what Art and Care could do to preſerve their Lives; and earneſt prayer to God was added, if it did conſiſt but with his Holy Pleaſure, that they might be longer ſpar'd. And after all, they

Died quietly on their Beds, and went to the Grave in peace, and died Lamented, and the laſt Offices of Friendſhip were perform'd at their Funerals, *&c.*

Moreover, you know not but they *are taken away from the Evil to come*; for notwithſtanding the beginning and progreſs of National Deliverances thus far, ſome of us may live to ſee the Cup of Trembling, that our Neighbours and Brethren have drunk of, come round to us, ſo that the Dead may be accounted more happy than the Living: As the Prophet ſpeaks, *Jer.* 22. 10. *Weep not for the Dead, but weep for him that goes forth, and eſcapeth Death.* You know not but ſuch a Calamity may befal this Land, this City, or their own Family, or Deareſt Friends, as would have made their Lives bitter, and miſerable, if they had been prolong'd.

And were nothing of all this to be conſider'd, it might yet be ſaid, *It is in vain to weep and mourn, you cannot call back the Deſire of your Eyes to Life again.* You only torment and hurt your ſelf, for heavineſs in the Heart of Man makes it ſtoop: it dries the Bones, and deadens the Spirit, and very much unfits for the Duties and Comforts of Life. Yea, which is worſe, Immoderate ſorrow for your departed Friends, does but prove that you love this World too well; it ſhews too plainly, that your Faith concerning the Inviſible Future-World is very weak; that you your ſelves as yet are too unprepar'd to die; or count upon tarrying longer here, than it may be God intends you ſhall. Theſe and ſuch like conſiderations have all their influence and uſe, in their proper place, to contribute ſomewhat to our Support, but of themſelves are not ſufficient.

There are four things, (among others,) that a Chriſtian Mourner ought to conſider for his Relief.

1. Whoſe Hand it is that gives the *ſtroke*, who it is that does it.

2. The *Faithfulneſs* of God to his Covenant Promiſe, notwithſtanding any ſuch Providences.

3. The Gain of thoſe who Die in the Lord, by our loſs of their Company.

4. Our Belief and Hope of meeting them again, with all the Children of the Kingdom, and (being with them) for ever with the Lord in Glory. And let me add, our Expectation of *knowing* them there; for that to me is more than probable.

*Firſt*, We ſhould not Grieve immoderately, when *Dear Relations* are remov'd *by Death*, becauſe it is the *Lord* that doth it; He who hath a Soveraign Authority and unqueſtionable Right to diſpoſe of us and them, as ſeems him good. *I take away the Deſire of thine Eyes with a ſtroke*; I have done it, ſaith the Lord. We miſtake our Tenure, if we think he may not call for his own, whenſoever he pleaſeth. The Lord *gives*, and the Lord *takes*, we muſt adore and bleſs his Holy Name in both: He is not Reſponſible at our Bar, or Accountable to us, for every thing he does: He hath not given us an Account of all his Matters: He does not think fit to anſwer all our Queſtions, or ſay all he can, to vindicate the Righteouſneſs, and Wiſdom of his preſent proceedings,—— *therefore, why doſt thou ſtrive with him?* Job 33.13. As a *Ruler*, it is true he hath ſhewed us reaſon enough in the general for ſuch Providences, but as our abſolute *Lord* and *Owner*, he need not.

It may be we importunately prayed for their Recovery, that God would ſpare them longer: But if we did not pray with a humble ſubmiſſion to his holy Will, our very Prayer was a Provocation, and we need to repent, and mourn for our ſelves. And do not all holy Parents, pray more earneſtly for the Salvation of their Children, and yet you know they are not all anſwer'd in kind: if they were, all the World would be ſaved; for doubtleſs holy *Noah* prayed for all his Children; and they, if they were holy, would do ſo for theirs, *&c.* But do we not daily ſupplicate for the honour of God's Government, for the Glory of his Name, the Accompliſhment of his Counſels, and the fulfilling of his unerring Will? and ſhall we Repine and Murmur, when our prayers are anſwer'd?

Conſider then, *whoſe Hand it is:* It is He hath taken who gave thee that, and all thy other Mercies, and prolongs innumerable ones, which thou haſt forfeited: And *ſhall we not receive evil at the hand of God, as well as good?* Job 2. 10. Eſpecially ſince he may have the ſame kind, and merciful Deſign in *taking* as he had in *giving*, and hath promiſed that *all things* (this not excepted) *ſhall work for good*: It is *He* hath done it, who is Infinitely Wiſe and Gracious, who loves, and pities, and ſpares us as a Father does a Child. And ſhall we not drink of that Cup which our Heavenly Father hath put into our hands? His Soveraignty might juſtly ſilence us, but his Goodneſs, Righteouſneſs, and Wiſdom, ſhould calm and ſettle our Hearts, and make us reſign our Will to his. It is *He* hath done it, who hath purchaſed a People out of the World, and is collecting them one after another, ſo ſoon as they are ready, and have ſerved the ends of his Glory upon Earth: And how ſhall the many Sons and Daughters be brought to Heaven, (for which end the Son of God was incarnate and dyed,) if we and others ſhould have our wiſh, that God ſhould take whom he would, and when he pleaſed, but *our Relations* ſhould be excepted? It is *He* hath done it, who told us, *that whoſoever loves Father, or Mother*

*ther, Wife, or Child, more than Chriſt, cannot be his Diſciple*, Luke 14. 26. It is *He*, unto whom our Relation is nearer, ſweeter, and more indiſſoluble, than *that* unto any of our Friends on Earth can be. It is *He* hath done it, who ſaid, *Father, I will, that thoſe whom thou haſt given me ſhall be where I am, to behold my Glory*, John 17. 14. And when he would remove any of ſuch a Character, how dear ſoever unto us, ſhall our Reluctant will oppoſe and gainſay his Wiſe, and Juſt, and Holy Pleaſure? Shall any of us dare ſay in ſuch a caſe, that *he is mine*, or *ſhe is mine*, I cannot yield to let them go? would we inſinuate that they are more *ours*, than *His*? Did he not make them? did he not renew them? and make them meet for Heaven? and ought he not rather to diſpoſe of them according to *His Will*, than ours? ought not *ours* to ſubſcribe to *His*?

*Secondly*, Conſider the *Faithfulneſs* of God to his Covenant promiſes, notwithſtanding ſuch Providential Tryals. Whatſoever Change He makes in our Families, and Conditions, the Bleſſed God is ſtill the ſame, what, and where he was, tho' our Relations and Friends are not *what* they were, or *where* they were. Tho' a Houſe be broken up, and a Family diſſolv'd, tho' one or more of the principal Members of it be ſnatch'd away, we who are left, may yet with *David encou-*

*rag*

*rage our ſelves in the Lord our God*, 2 Sam. 23. 5. ſaying, *Tho' my houſe be not ſo with God, yet hath he made with me an Everlaſting Covenant, ordered in all things, and ſure, and this is all my Salvation, and all my Deſire:* And is not this *All* enough? Ought we not ſo to reckon it? that tho' we ſhould be forſaken of all Creatures, God will never leave us, nor forſake us; that we ſhall not be *left alone*; he will ſtill be with us; the Husband of the Widow, and the Father of the Fatherleſs; ſhewing Mercy to them that fear him, and to their Seed after them, *and his Righteouſneſs* (or promiſed Mercy) *to their Childrens Children*, Pſal. 103. 7.

Can He not be better than all Relations? could any one of them be a Bleſſing or a Comfort to us without Him? Was it not from God, if any of them were ſo? how eaſily might he have imbitter'd their Company, who were the Delight of our Eyes? And can he not ſupply that Loſs out of his own fulneſs? Was He the Author of all the Comfort we enjoyed in, and by them, and cannot he make amends for their Abſence? Is not the Preſence of the God of all Conſolation, equivalent to theirs? May he not make us Gainers? and oblige us to own by Comfortable Experience, that in very faithfulneſs he hath thus afflicted? Did we better clear up our Covenant-Intereſt in the *All-ſufficiency* of God, it would be a ſpecial Means of our Support, in this, and all other afflicting Caſes.

*Thirdly*, Let us look from our ſelves to *Them*, whom God hath taken from us, and compare their *Gain* with our *Loſs*; and that will infer a Defect, either in our Faith, or in our Friendſhip, if we Mourn immoderately for thoſe who Dye in the Lord, and ſleep in Jeſus.

I Confeſs the Death of *Wicked Relations* is a very perplexing, and humbling Caſe. But yet we muſt remember, God is Wiſer and more Merciful than we, and doth all things for his own Glory: And we cannot doubt, but when we come to Heaven, our Minds and Wills ſhall be entirely Conform'd to his. And for the preſent it cannot well be Anſwer'd, Why one or two of our particular Kindred, that Dyed in Sin, ſhou'd be ſo much more lamented, than the many Hundreds and Thouſands, that every Week or Month are cut off under Damning Guilt. Let us thank God for his diſtinguiſhing Grace, if He have brought *us* to Repent, and Believe, and Obey the Goſpel; and do what we can that others alſo may, eſpecially thoſe of our Kindred and Acquaintance: With unfeigned Sorrow that we have done no more to further their Converſion and Salvation; and then we may rejoice in the Glory of God, and our Bleſſed Redeemer, by the Faith and Holineſs of thoſe that are, or ſhall be ſaved.

Were this our Temper, as it ought to be, we ſhould not be apt to grieve exceſſively at the Death of our Holy Friends: For they are delivered from the Guilt and Power of Sin, and have received the End of their Faith, and Patience, and Hope: They have overcome the difficulties that we muſt longer Conflict with, and have ſafely paſs'd thoſe Changes we muſt yet be proved by. We have many Dangers yet to eſcape, many hazardous Temptations yet to reſiſt; a difficult Warfare yet to manage againſt the Enemy of our Souls; many weary Days and Hours to paſs, under the troubleſome Effects of Sin, and the Aſſaults of the Devil: We muſt yet tarry in the Wilderneſs, and know the Tryals of a ſojourning State, while they are got ſafe to the Promiſed Reſt: We muſt yet toil, and labour, and ſtrive under Cares, and Fears, and Wants, and Difficulties of many kinds, inward and outward, Perſonal and Relative, publick and private, but they are beyond the reach of either; they ſhall be allur'd, or diſquieted, by the ſuggeſtions of the Devil no more; they ſhall be in fear of Hell, and under Apprehenſions of God's Diſpleaſure no more; they ſhall be in hazard of Infection by bad Company, or grieved by the Scandals and ill Examples of the Ungodly no more, for they are joined to the Holy Society above, in the bleſſed Viſions, Services, and Rejoicings of that better World.

Not only are they deliver'd from what is now afflictive to us, but bountifully rewarded, and Happy in the Knowledge, and Love of God. Not only have they their Iron Fetters knock'd off from their feet, but a Crown of Glory put upon their Heads: Not only ſtript of their filthy Garments, but cloathed with pure and immortal Light: Not only all their Sorrows vaniſht, but their Souls filled with unutterable Joy, waiting for the Completion of it, at the Reſurrection of the Dead.

We think, it may be we ſtand in need of *their* Company; we are certain they need not *ours*, having left an Imperfect, Dark, Defiling, Tempting, Troubleſome, Miſerable World, and are gone to a Bleſſed Society, and State of Holineſs and Peace. From Doubts, and Darkneſs, and Complaints, to the Boſom of Infinite Love, where they ſhall Complain and Weep no more for ever. And therefore tho' our Saviour *Wept* when *Lazarus* died, becauſe it is ſaid *he loved him*, the reaſon ſeems to be, becauſe our Lord knew that † *Lazarus* was to return to be upon the Earth again; he knew that it was for the Glory of God, that he ſhould be raiſed from the Dead, and return to be Tryed, and Tempted, and Troubled again. But it is not ſo with our departed Friends. Oh let us believingly look upward, where they are, and think what they are doing, and remember how much otherwiſe it was with them not long ago: And can we wiſh them back again? while we ſigh, and weep, and mourn, we know all Tears are wiped away from their Eyes, and they are ſinging the Song of the Lamb. They are now feeding on the pleaſant Fruits of Paradiſe, and would we have them back again, to eat the Bread of Affliction, and drink the Waters of Affliction? Would we, they ſhould return from the ſtate of Triumph, after Victory, to engage again in new Combats? From the Port and Haven of Eternal Reſt, to be toſt again upon a Tempeſtuous Sea? And this, becauſe they were *our Kindred*, and *our Relations*; for you do not mourn, that the Prophets, and Apoſtles, and all the Faithful mentioned in Holy Scripture, or ſince in former Ages, that *They* are gone to Heaven. The *Ancient Chriſtians* kept Days of Thankſgiving, for the ſafe Departure of ſuch. But how dear ſoever they were to us, *we ſhall go to them, they ſhall not come to us*: We are very unkind if we deſire they ſhould have Tarryed longer, when God hath made them ready; they are gone to better Friends than thoſe they have left behind. And *if you Loved me,* ſaid Chriſt, *you would rejoyce that I ſaid, I go to my Father and your Father, to my God, and your God.*

---

† *Iſid. Peluſ.* L. 2. Epiſt. 173.

The Friends they have left are Imperfect, Sinning, Sorrowing, Troubleſome and Unſuitable, compared with thoſe they meet *above.* And *there* only our Friendſhip, and Affections to one another, will be without any mixture of Grief, or Sin; without any Infirmity, Suſpicion, Diſcontent, or other allay, by their Weakneſſes, Sins, or Sufferings: *There* ſhall we have all our Wiſhes, and Deſires, for our Friends, as well as for our Selves; and converſe continually together, without being weary of one anothers Company: They had once ſuch a vile Body as we have, and ſuch diſorderly Paſſions, ſuch Errors, and Miſtakes, and Actual Sins as we are guilty of. They were troubled with ſuch Temptations, Doubts, and Deſertions, as we complain of: but their probationary State is now over, their Warfare is accompliſh'd, their Work done, their Race ended, their Courſe finiſh'd, and *they are enter'd into the Joy of the Lord.* Oh let us remember that they are ſo, while we Weep and Mourn, partly for their Departure, and more (it ſhould be) for our Unfitneſs (as yet) to be with them. But we have the ſame God and Saviour, the ſame Way and Rule, the ſame bleſſed Recompence of Reward, propos'd and promis'd, and prepar'd; the ſame Grace and Aſſiſtance offered, to enable us to Perſevere and Overcome. It is but a little while, ſince they had as malicious Enemies to oppoſe and conquer, and as difficult a work to mind as we, and were as unlikely to hold out, as ſome of us. Their inward and outward Troubles were like to ours; their bodily Weakneſſes, and Spiritual Diſtreſſes like to ours, but they have overcome them; yet a little while, and we hope we may do ſo too. And it is *but a little while*; let us not then *grieve immoderately*, being our ſelves to follow ſo ſoon after, to partake (we hope) in that Bleſſedneſs with them for ever; which we have often joyned together in Prayer, to ask of God for them, and for our ſelves. And this we need not queſtion, if we chooſe the ſame Felicity [†] as our End, and Chriſt as the Captain of our Salvation, to direct and lead us in the way thither; if we build on the ſame Word of Promiſe, and follow the Conduct of the ſame Spirit of Holineſs; if we live in the exerciſe of the like Grace, and are conform'd to Chriſt our Head in Spirit, Purpoſe, and Behaviour, and hold on in doing and ſuffering his Will, with conſtancy to the Death. If we do thus, we ſhall ſhortly be with them; and becauſe we were wont to mourn with them, when they mourned, and to take part in their Afflictions, let us do ſo in their Joys alſo; Thanking God for their Deliverance, and Rejoycing in their Felicity.

---

[†] Mr. *Baxter*'s Life of Faith, ch. 26.

*Fourthly*, The laſt Argument for our Support, is *the Belief and Hope of the Reſurrection of the Dead*, when we ſhall meet them, and all the Children of the Kingdom, in the Preſence of the Lord. We know that *thoſe who ſleep in Jeſus; he will bring with him*, and openly abſolve, and own them before all the World, and give them the full poſſeſſion of the *promiſed Inheritance*. We are bid to *Comfort* our ſelves, and one another, with ſuch joyful words. 'Tis *Comfort* that there is *a Redeemer*, and that he is *their Reedeemer*, as well as ours; that *he Lives*, and *will come again*; and that we *know this*, on certain and infallible grounds; and *that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him*, by *ſeeing him as he is*. It is *Comfort*, that even theſe Bodies that muſt be buried out of ſight, and putrifie in a ſilent Grave, ſhall be raiſed, and Enlivened, and made like the glorious Body of our Redeemer. Tho' Death devour their Beauty, and the Grave hold them Priſoners for ſome thouſands of years; tho' they ſhould be burnt to Aſhes, or devour'd by Worms, Beaſts, or Fiſhes, however crumbled and divided into little parts, and theſe ſcatter'd and diſpers'd into a thouſand diſtant Places; yet he will raiſe, and re-unite, and reſtore them, Freſh and Spritely, Beautiful and Glorious. That Power which at firſt did form, and faſhion them in the Womb, hath engaged to do it. *This Corruptible ſhall put on Incorruption; and this Mortal put on Immortality; and Death be ſwallowed up in Victory.* What was *ſown in Weakneſs* ſhall then be *raiſed in Power*: our Bodies ſhall then be Active and Nimble, quick and free, eaſily paſſing in a little ſpace to a great diſtance, and readily obeying the Motions of our Glorified Spirits. What was ſown *a Natural, Earthly Body*, ſhall be raiſed *Spiritual*; ſuited to the ſpiritual State, and Life, and work of Heaven; not needing the Supplies of Food or Phyſick, or any of thoſe things which now employ ſo much of our Time and Care, in reference to the Body. In a word, they ſhall be *raiſed in Glory*, however *vile* they now are, as the Bodies of our *Humiliation*: And ſhall ſhine brighter than the Sun in its Meridian Splendor, with a *Glory* ſuitable to the Excellency of that Power exerted in their Reſurrection, ſuitable to the Dignity of our Glorified Souls, ſuitable to the Glory of that Place, where they are to inhabit; and of the Noble Services, wherein they are to be employed; and eſpecially ſuitable to their Excellent *Exemplar*, the Glorious Body of Chriſt, whoſe Reſurrection and Exaltation is the Cauſe, Pattern, and Pledge of *ours*.

And this we may depend upon, for our Lord hath not only left us *the Earneſt of his Spirit*, to aſſure us of the Reſurrection, that our Mortal Bodies ſhall be quicken'd by the ſame Spirit, that raiſed him from the *Dead*; but he hath carried *the Earneſt of our Fleſh* into Heaven with him, to aſſure us, that all his Friends, Favourites, and Followers, ſhall one day be with him, to *behold his Glory*.

Let this then be remembred as the matter of our Chriſtian Hope, that we may not mourn, * as Strangers to the Goſpel, for ſuch *as dye in the Lord*. We find the *Egyptians* mourned longer for *Jacob* than *Joſeph* did, even *threeſcore and ten days*. They that have little Knowledge, and Expectation concerning *another Life*, and the Reſurrection of the Dead, may more excuſably extend their Funeral Sorrows, and grieve for the loſs of *this*, and equal the Days of their Mourning to the number of the years of the Life of Man: but ſo tedious a Funeral Solemnity would have been unſuitable to *Joſeph*'s Faith. Had he ſhown himſelf more *a Son*, by ſuch a Teſtimony of his Natural Affection, in Mourning longer, he had ſhown himſelf leſs a *Patriarch*.

---

* See *Cyprian de Mortalitate ad finem. Greg. Nazianz. Orat. decima in laudem Cæſarii Fratris Fun.*

When God reſtored to *Job*, after his long Tryals, *double* for all his Cattel and Goods which he had loſt,as Fourteen thouſand Sheep for Seven thouſand, *&c.* he gave him but the ſame number of Children again: for they were not really *loſt*, though Death remov'd 'em; they were *Alive* in another State: And if they were Holy Perſons, he had the like number in Heaven, as God gave him on Earth. It's a great Relief to a Chriſtian Mourner to conſider, that his Deceaſed Friends are not *Loſt*, but *Live*. I know very well that the Holy Will of God muſt take place of mine: I know that I ought to love God and Chriſt above all, and abſolutely reſign my ſelf, and All that's mine, or cannot hope to ſee his Face: I know that I ſhall ſhortly follow the *Deſire of mine Eyes*: I hope I ſhall be ſilent, and adore, and not *charge God fooliſhly*. But methinks I know (with ſenſible ſupporting Influence from ſuch a Thought) that *She is not Dead, but Sleepeth*; *She is not Loſt, but Lives*: And if I get to Heaven, ſhall meet her there, in the preſence of the Lord our Redeemer. And then the *Company* of our Holy *Relatives* will be more *Sweet* than ever it was on Earth.

For though the Bleſſed Viſion of God be our *Chiefeſt* Hope and Joy, yet the Preſence of all the Bleſſed Spirits will make a *Real*, though Subordinate, part of our Happineſs, and Delight. “ I am ſo far from doubting “ whether we ſhall *Know* and *Love* one another “ in the Heavenly State, that the Belief and “ Expectation of it, is, or ſhould be, one great “ Motive why we love 'em ſo well now.” If we thought we ſhould not Know and Love them after Death, we ought to Love 'em but as Earthly, Tranſitory things, and not as *Heirs of Heaven*, with ſuch a Love as ſhall be perfected, and laſt for ever.

Neither can it well be imagin'd how the Proceſs and Proceedings of the Judgment-Day, according to the Scripture Account of it, can be manag'd by *the Man Chriſt Jeſus*, (or the Lord Redeemer cloath'd with Humane Nature,) without our Knowledge of One Another in the *other* World, who were acquainted, and convers'd together in *this*. 'Tis true, the preſent Relations by Marriages and Blood will then ceaſe; but there is no reaſon to think, that the Remembrance of thoſe Relations muſt alſo ceaſe: Yea, their Knowledge and Remembrance of us, and their Affection to us, whom we knew, and lov'd in the Lord, is not like to be *aboliſh'd*, but *perfected by Dying*.

Doubtleſs the Angels who rejoyce at the Converſion of a Particular Sinner, and the Departed Saints too, do know more even of the State of *this* World, than we do, who are acquainted with ſo very little a part and ſpot of it. Which, by the way, ſhould check an inordinate fond Deſire, of living to ſee Glorious Times on Earth; For if we get to Heaven, we are like to know much more of thoſe Happy Times, than if we remain'd alive in a Corner of the Iſles of the *Gentiles.*

---

* Mr. *Baxter*, Of the *Divine Life*, part 3. p. 331.

But as to our Mutual Knowledge in the Heavenly State: Shall thoſe whom we Reliev'd on Earth, Welcome us to Heaven? (And are therefore ſaid to *receive us into Everlaſting Habitations,* Luk. 16.) And ſhall not the departed Saints know one another in Glory? Shall we then know, *as we are known?* And ſhall the *Theſſalonians* be the Joy, and Crown, and Glory, and Rejoycing of the Apoſtle *Paul,* in the Day of Chriſt? And ſhall he not know them, or they him, who profited by his Miniſtry? Did the Rich Man in Hell know *Abraham* afar off in Heaven, and can we think a bleſſed *Lazarus* ſhall not? For though that be a Parable, there is ſome Truth as the Foundation of it. Shall it aggravate the Miſery of loſt Souls, to meet their wicked Companions in the place of Torment? as few deny, or doubt: And ſhall it not Rejoyce the Bleſſed, to meet their Holy Friends whom they knew in this World? Did *Peter, James,* and *John* know *Moſes* and *Elias* in the Transfiguration, whom they never ſaw before? (and we read not that Chriſt told 'em who they were:) And ſhall thoſe who were acquainted upon

Earth, and helpt one another to Heaven, utterly forget, and loſe the remembrance of any ſuch thing?

It is a pleaſant Thought, (and proper to ſupport under the Death of thoſe we have honoured, and loved, and profited by, on Earth,) to think that hereafter we ſhall meet, and know, ſeveral Miniſters of Chriſt, whoſe Preaching, and Converſe, and Writings, have been uſeful to us: That we ſhall then meet, and know, ſeveral of our Holy *Relations* and Acquaintance, with whom we were wont to walk together to the Houſe of God, and meet often at the Table of the Lord; with whom we conferr'd about the Miſteries and Promiſes of the Goſpel, and many a time diſcours'd together of the Heavenly Inheritance; believingly to foreſee, and conſider, that though they are gone before, we ſhall meet 'em again, at the laſt great Supper of the Lamb, in the Celeſtial Kingdom.

And why may not I ſuppoſe ſuch a diſtinct and perſonal Knowledge, and Remembrance of one another, as to be able to ſay, *This was the Perſon,* whom God employed to bring me into the World, and educate me in his Fear; who inſtructed my tender Years, and taught me early to Know the Lord. Or, *This was the Perſon,* who was at ſo much pains to convince me of my Sin, and reclaim me from the Errour of my Ways: *This was He,* or *She,* who tendred my Salvation as their own; who watch'd over me, and pray'd for me, and with me; and often told me of the Evil of Sin, of the Excellency and Pleaſantneſs of Wiſdom's Ways, of the Freeneſs of the Love and Grace of Chriſt; and his Willingneſs to receive Returning Penitents at firſt, and even Backſliders afterwards. *This was the Perſon*, who was aſſiſted by God to encourage, ſtrengthen, revive and comfort my deſponding, my doubting, my unbelieving Heart; and eſtabliſh me in the way of Truth: Yea, to be able to ſay, *This was the Perſon*, with whom I lived, and ſojourned in yonder World; whoſe ſincere Affection I ſo much valued; whoſe delightful, uſeful Company, I ſo much prized, whoſe Sickneſs and Removal I ſo much lamented, *&c.* —— But leſt I run too far, let me draw to a Cloſe.

Let us therefore, after what hath been ſaid, reſolve to have *Communion* with them, though they are Departed; by Contemplating *what* they are, and *where* they are, and what they *do*, and what they *poſſeſs*; and by Rejoycing in their Bleſſedneſs, more than we would have done for their Temporal Advancement in any kind on Earth. Let us deſire and endeavour to be *as like* 'em as we can, by imitating their Temper and Work above, in the Love of God, and the delightful thankful Praiſes of the Redeemer. When we look up to *Heaven*, let us think *they* are *there*. When we think

of *Chriſt* in *Heaven*, let us remember *they* are part of *his Family* above. When we think with hope of entring into *Heaven our Selves*, let us think with Joy of meeting *them* there.
“ Oh welcome, welcome, happy meeting
“ with Chriſt, and them; Never more to
“ Part, never more to Mourn, never more to
“ Sin. *O Happy Change! O Bleſſed Society!*
“ (ſhall we then cry out,) with whom we ſhall
“ live for ever, to Know, and Love, Admire,
“ and Praiſe, and Serve our Common Lord!
“ We formerly ſinn'd together, and Suffer'd
“ together. But this is not like our old
“ Work or State; Our former Darkneſs,
“ Complaints, and Sorrows are now vaniſht.
“ This Body, this Soul, this Life, this Place,
“ this Company, theſe Viſions, theſe Frui-
“ tions, theſe Services and Employments, are
“ not like what we had in the former World.
“ And yet, which is the Quinteſſence and
“ Spirit of all, this Happineſs ſhall laſt to all
“ Eternity, and after Millions of Ages be as
“ far from ending, as when at firſt began. *Fit us, Lord! for ſuch a Day, and Come, Lord Jeſus! Comely quickly.* Amen.

THE END.

[illegible] Misery? [illegible] and Saints [illegible] Heaven [illegible] cannot [illegible] of [illegible]. Oh welcome, welcome [illegible] with Christ, and [illegible] Inhabitants of Heaven [illegible] to him. O Happy Change! [illegible] I shall have [illegible] to [illegible]; and Love, [illegible] Praise and [illegible] between [illegible]. We [illegible] together. [illegible] Work or State, [illegible] Complaints, [illegible] This Body, this Soul, [illegible] this Place, this Company, these [illegible] tions, these Services and [illegible] are not like what we had in the former World. And that which is the Quintessence and [illegible] of all the Happiness shall be to all Eternity, and after Millions of Ages be as far from ending as when it first began. To [illegible] for such a [illegible] and [illegible] Amen.

THE END.

# A
# CONTINUATION
# OF
# FUNERAL
# DISCOURSES:
## OR, THE
## Mourners Companion.

---

### The Second Part.

---

### By *John Shower*.

---

*LONDON:*
Printed for *Sam. Crouch*, at the Corner of
*Popes Head-Alley* in *Cornhill*; and *J. Lawrence*
at the *Angel* in the *Poultry*, 1699.

# THE CONTENTS.

## SERMON I.

*ADvice to Youth* : On the Death of Mr. *Richard Walter*, who died *Jan.* 13. 169$\frac{1}{2}$.

### PSALM CXIX. 9.

*Wherewithal ſhall a Young Man cleanſe his ways? By taking heed* thereto, *according to thy Word.*

## SERMON II.

*Death our Deliverance* : Or, A Funeral Sermon for Mrs. *Mary Doolittle*, in part preach'd, and ſince enlarged.

### 2 COR. V. 4.

*We that are in this Tabernacle do groan, being Burdened, not for that we would be uncloathed, but cloathed upon, that Mortality might be ſwallowed up of Life.*

# The Contents.

### SERMON III.

A Funeral Sermon on the Death of the Reverend Mr. *Nathanael Oldfield*, who died *Decemb.* 31. 1696.

HEB. XIII. 7.

*Remember them who have the Rule over you, who have ſpoken unto you the Word of God; whoſe Faith follow, conſidering the End of their Converſation.*

---

### SERMON IV.

A Funeral Sermon on the Death of Mr. *Samuel Byfield*, who died *March* 27. 1698.

ECCLES. IX. 10.

*Whatſoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no Work nor Deviee, nor Knowledge, nor Wiſdom in the Grave, whither thou goeſt.*

# *Advice to Youth:*

Or, A Funeral

# SERMON

On the Death of
Mr. *Richard Walter*,
Who dyed in the 18th Year of
his Age, *January* 13. 169½.

---

## Pſal. CXIX. 9.

*Wherewithal ſhall a Young Man cleaſe his way? By taking heed* thereto *according to thy Word.*

A Practical Diſcourſe to Young Perſons would not be unfit at any Time, in this Age, and in this City, if there were no ſpecial Occaſion leading to it: But it is moſt fit, when there is one, ſuch as the Providence of God hath now given me, by the *Death* and *Funeral* of a Young Gentleman. It may be hop'd, as to ſome of his Acquaintance, that his Death may help to enforce the Counſel contained in the Text: Which will admit to be conſidered two ways. Either

*Firſt*, As the rectifying and cleanſing the Way of Youth, is a neceſſary *Means* in order to the obeying God's Word, and the keeping his Commandments. The Original will bear this Interpretation: And ſome Ancient Verſions do countenance it. The Senſe then is this, How ſhall Young Men be purged and purified by Divine Grace, ſo as thereby to be qualified for Obedience to God? It is a kind of Prayer (in a Poetick ſtrain) for that Grace which is neceſſary to Holy Walking. But

Dr. *Hammond.*

*Secondly*, I chuſe rather to conſider thoſe Words, as an Anſwer to the Enquiry, *By what means* we may be ſanctified betimes, and enabled to pleaſe and obey God in our whole Courſe. And that we are told, is by carefully obſerving, and *taking heed to the Word of God:* The Bleſſed Influence whereof to that purpoſe is here Aſſerted, and Amplified. Partly from the *Subject*, with reſpect to whom it hath this Effect, *A Young Man.* Partly from the Special Object, about which this purifying Influence of the Divine Word is emplyed, in ſuch an one, *i. e. The Cleanſing of his Way.* This extends to all that needs to be rectified either in Heart or Life, in Spirit or Practice: Not only as to his external Behaviour, but his inward Principles and Temper. For we read of the Young Man's walking *in the way of his own Heart*, and in the ſight of his own Eyes, *Eccl.*xi.9.

Neither are we to over-look the Form and Manner of Expreſſion, by way of *Queſtion, Wherewithal ſhall a Young Man cleanſe his way?* The Pſalmiſt had before declared the Deſire of his Soul, that his Life might be ordered according to God's Word. *Oh that my ways were directed to keep thy Statutes!* Verſe 5. He had profeſſed the Purpoſe and Reſolution of his Heart to endeavour it. *I will keep thy Statutes, O forſake me not utterly!* Verſe 8. Upon which follows the Interrogation in the Text, *Wherewithal*, &c. *i. e.* ‘ But ‘ how ſhall one ſo Young as I am, under ‘ the Guidance of a Deceived Mind, and ‘ the Biaſs of Corrupt and Vicious Incli‑ ‘ nations, aſſiſted with very little Expe‑ ‘ rience, ſurrounded with many danger‑ ‘ ous Examples, and ſuitable Temptati-

‘ ons, *&c. How*, or *wherewithal* ſhall *ſuch* ‘ *a One* be Cleanſed, and Reformed, and ‘ Enabled to pleaſe and obey God. The Anſwer is, By attending to the Inſtructions of *his Word*, by obſerving the Orders and Directions he hath *there* given us, by applying that Word for our Sanctification, and by following the Holy Counſels and Conduct of it.

The Queſtion it ſelf, How this may be done, doth ſuppoſe the *Neceſſity*, and imply the *Difficulty* of it. There is great need it ſhould be done; but how ſhall it be effected? Were it not a matter of ſome Difficulty, there would be no ground for ſuch a Queſtion, *by what means* it may be brought about. But becauſe it is not a ſlight and eaſie, though moſt needful matter, the proper Means muſt be diligently ſought for, and minded, *viz. by taking heed unto the Word of God.*

For the opening of this Paſſage, there are *Four things* to be conſidered.

*Firſt*, The ſinful ways of *Youth*, that need to be Rectified and Cleanſed.

*Secondly*, The *Difficulty* that is ſuppoſed by the Interrogation, to Purifie and Reform them.

*Thirdly*, The ſufficient and only Means how this may be done, *i.e.* by *the Word of God.*

*Fourthly*, The Neceſſity of *careful Attendance* unto this Word, and particular Application of it, to an effectual Cure.

*Firſt*, Concerning the ſinful impure ways of *Youth*, which need to be Rectified and Cleanſed. The Corruption of Human Nature upon the firſt Apoſtacy, is not more plainly expreſſed in the Divine Revelation, than manifeſt in the Effects of it, unto the Experience of all, who are any ways acquainted with themſelves. We need but compare what we find in our ſelves, with the Holy Image, Nature, and Law of God, unto which at firſt there was a juſt Conformity and Agreement in the Nature of Man. But now we are alienated from God, and diſaffected to him. The inward and deep depravation of the *Underſtanding* and *Will*, the Two Superior Powers of the Soul, that command the reſt, may eaſily be diſcerned, if we will but examine and reflect upon our ſelves. That our Judgments are deceived, and our Minds blinded, and our Wills fetter'd by Senſual Luſts, and that we are pleaſed with our Slavery, and unwilling to be delivered. The Rectitude of our Nature being loſt by the Firſt Tranſgreſſion, an Hereditary Corruption is tranſmitted from Tit. 3. 3.

our Firſt Parents to all their Poſterity. *We are ſhapen in Iniquity, and conceived in Sin: And that which is born of the Fleſh is* Fleſh. *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?* This diſcovers it ſelf very early in Children, and with more violence in the various Luſts of *Youth*, according to the ſeveral Circumſtances of their Conditions in the World, and the different Channel that is formed for it by their particular Conſtitutions and Tempers.

The moſt principal Duties, and Inſtitutions of Chriſtianity, do ſuppoſe this Degeneracy and Corruption of Human Nature; and in this and many other Scriptures, it is manifeſtly implyed. The Subject of this Text is not Pure and Unbiaſſed, equally indifferent unto Good or Evil, but 'tis ſuppoſed that he needs to be *Purified*, as well as guided. *Wherewithal ſhall a Young Man cleanſe his way? His way cleanſed:* There is hardly any Metaphor whereby the Affections and Converſations of Men are more uſually expreſſed, than by this of their *Way* and *Walk:* But there are ſome particular ways of Wickedneſs more appropriate unto *Youth*, than to Elder Perſons. The Inſtructions, Counſels and Exhortations of the Holy Scriptures, (beſides thoſe of common and univerſal Concern, ) are therefore all ſuited to the various Claſſes, under which Men may be ſeverally conſidered.

There are ſome corrupt Inclinations and Practices, ſome ways of Sin to which *Young Men* are more inclined and tempted than before, or after that Age; which in Childhood they are not arrived unto, and in Riper Years are commonly exchanged for others: I ſay *commonly*, becauſe ſometimes Gray Hairs are deformed by the Vices and Follies of Youth; and ſometimes the Wiſdom and Virtues of Old Age may be Eminently the Ornament of Young Men. Old Age may ſometimes *flouriſh* in Youth, and be as often *periſhed* in thoſe that are well ſtricken in Years. Covetouſneſs for inſtance, is not ſo much the Peculiar Vice of the Aged, but may be the Fault of Young Perſons. The *Rich Young Man* in the Goſpel is an Inſtance, who told our Lord, that he had kept the Commandments. But he had Houſes, and Lands, and Bags of Mony, which ſtood in his way to Heaven, thoſe he obſerved, and *kept* as well as the Commandments. Particular Countries and Places, particular Callings and Relations, particular Seaſons and Times may have their ſpecial Sins; and ſo have the different Ages of Men. The Ignorance of Youth is commonly attended with Pride and Conceitedneſs. For they who know but a few things, are always moſt preſumptuous of their own Underſtanding, and ſo are commonly more Raſh and Haſty, Giddy and Inconſtant, fond of Liberty, and impatient of Reſtraint, Affecters of Novelty, and Lovers of Pleaſure, of Company, Paſtime, and Senſual Mirth, *&c.*

There are ſome Youthful Luſts, which young *Timothy* is warned againſt, ſuch as Ambition and Vain-glory, Curioſity, and Envy to appear Great and Conſiderable before others, as the Scope of the Place, and three or four following Verſes ſeem to manifeſt. Not *Drunkenneſs* and *Uncleanneſs*, or ſuch Carnal Luſts. For tho' all Men have the Seeds of theſe, yet the Modeſty and Frugality, the Weakneſs of Conſtitution, and often Infirmities of *Timothy*, make it very improbable they ſhould here be principally meant. The Corruption of Human Nature, 'tis true, doth uſually, and with great Violence diſcover it ſelf in unſanctified Youth, by *theſe Luſts* of the Fleſh. Theſe are ſome of the ways of their Heart, according to which they form their Lives: Where the Reſtraint of Bodily

2 Tim. ii. 22.

Temper, ſpecial Providence, Religious Education, and Divine Grace do not make the Difference.

I need not go about to prove that *Childhood and Youth are Vanity, or Sinful Folly*, conſidering the many Examples in Scripture, and the multitude of ſuch in every Age, and in none more than our own; conſidering the frequent Warnings given us by God againſt ſuch Luſts; conſidering the bitter Remorſes, and penitent Confeſſions of many who are truly Converted, or but Awakned by the proſpect of Death and Judgment; conſidering the earneſt Supplications even of Good Men, that God would not *Remember the Sins of their Youth.* Even *David* thought he had cauſe for ſuch a Requeſt, *Pſal.* 25. 7. whoſe Poverty and Piety, whoſe Induſtry and Afflictive Trials in his younger Years, were a very great Reſtraint from thoſe Luſts which are more unbridled in others of another Education and Condition. Not to mention how many in Riper Years are made to *poſſeſs the Sins of their Youth*, Job 13. 26. *and their very Bones are full of them*, Job 20. 11. For a young Sinner hath himſelf for his *Heir* and *Succeſſor*, when he is Old; and that which he receives for his Inheritance, is only the Sorrowful Re-

Remembrance and bitter Fruits of his Youthful Follies.

It is ſad to conſider how many Young Men of hopeful Parts, and promiſing Capacities, are taken in the Devil's Snares, in the purſuit of Senſual Pleaſures; and lay up Matter for future Diſeaſes, and bodily Pains; how they poiſon their Blood, and weaken their Conſtitutions; how they haſten or antedate the Infirmities of Old Age, and do what they can to dig their own Graves. But it is a more Melancholly Reflection, to conſider how they provoke GOD, and incenſe his Almighty Vengeance; how they wound and wrong their own Souls, and treaſure up Wrath againſt the Day of Wrath; how they provide Fuel for everlaſting Fire, and conſign their Bodies and Souls to Hell for ever. To ſee them run headlong to their own deſtruction, by walking in the way of their Hearts, and in the ſight of their own Eyes: To conſider how eaſily they are led into deſtructive Paths, and made a cheap and haſty Prey by the Tempter, till they are hardned paſt Recovery, or cut off in the midſt of their days, by a ſudden Arreſt of Judgment. And ſo for the ſhort and vain Pleaſures of Youth, they periſh to *Eternity*; unleſs ſome few of them by an Extraordinary Grace are recovered at the laſt Hour, and renewed unto Saving Repentance: But it is much to be feared, that very few *Death-Bed Penitents* are ſo.

*Secondly*, It is ſuppoſed to be a matter of no ſmall *Difficulty*, for a Young Man to Reform and Cleanſe his Ways. This in part appears from what hath been ſaid already of the Corruption of Human Nature, and the Vicious Inclinations of Youth. Their Ignorance and Raſhneſs, and want of Experience, their Averſion to ſerious Thoughts, for fear of *Melancholy*; with the apprehended Unſuitableneſs of Reſtraint and Retirement unto Perſons of their Age, do all increaſe the Difficulty. They uſually reckon that they have the World before them, they have Time enough hereafter, and are now in the Age of Liberty and Pleaſure, and that both God and Man will indulge a great deal to *Them*, becauſe of their Youth: Preſuming at the ſame time, that *a great while hence*, they ſhall have Opportunity, and Heart, and Help, to work out their Salvation when ever they pleaſe. For when they Calculate their own Nativities, they reckon to the longeſt Term of Human

Life, that any are wont to reach to. Their Sun is climbing higher, they have a great while to Night, and ſo are far removed from the Thoughts of Death. Accordingly, when ever they are adviſed by thoſe who are *Elder*, to look forward to the Grave, and beyond it, to bethink themſelves of their Everlaſting State, and to provide for an Endleſs Life; their inward Thought is agreeable to the High-Prieſt's Anſwer unto *Judas*, *What is that to us, Look thou to that*.

Such is the Strength and Power of Senſe, and Fancy in the Days of our *Youth*; ſuch is the Weakneſs of our Reaſon, (as not having attained to any great Conſiſtency of Judgment, which muſt be ripened by Conſideration and Experience:) ſuch is the Violence of our Paſſions, and the Inconſtancy of our Reſolutions; ſo variable and uncertain the Objects of our Affections and Choice; ſuch the venomous Influence of *Self-Flattery*, and that of others about us; ſuch the force of Examples, and ſo great the number of ill ones; ſo deep the Impreſſions we receive by the Company we converſe with; (eſpecially if Atheiſtical or Licentious Youths are the Inſtruments of the Devil to entice us;) ſo little Command have we of our ſelves, to bridle thoſe Impetuous Luſts that are eaſily Fired by every Spark of Temptation; and ſo intolerable is the Reproach imagined of being *Singular*, (or not complying with the Cuſtoms of thoſe of the ſame Age with our ſelves) that on theſe and the like Accounts, the Devil hath a mighty Advantage againſt us, in that Portion of our Time.

For the moſt part, *Young Men* are Changeable and Unſteady, Heedleſs and Unwary, are but little Fortified againſt the Wiles of the Devil; are little uſed to conſider things with any Strength, and Intenſneſs of Thought, and prone to flatter themſelves with fooliſh Hopes and Projects of the wonderful things which they ſhall be able to compaſs, to do, and be, and enjoy, and reach, before they leave the World, *&c.* That 'tis no wonder that the Principal (becauſe moſt hopeful) Attempts of the Devil are directed againſt ſuch, to deceive and deſtroy them by Youthful Luſts. Children are not capable of doing him ſuch Service, or themſelves ſuch Prejudice, or of being employed to ſo many ill-purpoſes: And commonly Old Men are already fix'd in their way. The Minds of Youth are more flexible, and withal ſharper for any Undertaking;

their Bodies ſtronger and more active for moſt kinds of Wickedneſs, their Blood more warm, their Spirits more Vigorous; as their ſinful Deſires are more Raging, and all their Paſſions more vehement. On which account the Wiſdom of the Ancients would not admit Perſons very Young to the Lectures of Moral, or Civil Philoſophy: as ſuppoſing them to be ſo very much under the Government of their Paſſions, that good Counſel would be loſt upon them, and all ſuch Diſcourſes prove in vain.

Ariſt. Ethic. Lib.1. Chap.1.

But tho' the Philoſophers deſpaired of being able to reclaim and reduce Young Men by their weak and naked Rules of Morality, we need not do ſo, who are under the diſpenſation of *a Goſpel of Grace*, and are acquainted with the power of *the Divine Word*. The Precepts of Philoſophy may aſſiſt our Recovery from the groſſer Immoralities in practice; ſuch as violate the plain Sentiments of Natural Conſcience, or are Scandalous in the view of Men. But the Divine Word, (accompanied with the power of the Spirit,) can work an effectual Cure in Heart and Life, by healing our *Corrupt Nature*, and making us partakers of the *Divine*. This is one ſpecial Priviledge of the Goſpel State; and is much for the honour of Divine Grace; recommending at the ſame time the Excellency of the Word of God, as the holy Means of it. Which leads us to conſider

*Thirdly*, That the Word of God is the ſufficient, and only means of Cleanſing and Reforming the ſinful ways of Youth. This Enlightens the Eyes, Converts the Soul, makes Wiſe the Simple, ſhews us the Way of Life, and keeps us from the Paths of the Deſtroyer. It was for this end, that our Bleſſed Lord gave himſelf, *that we might be Sanctified ond Cleanſed with the Waſhing of Water, by the Word*, Eph. 5. 26. He declared that his Diſciples were *Clean by the Word he had ſpoken to them*, John 15. 3. He prays that they might be *Sanctified by the Truth*, which Truth is his *Word*; and makes the ſame Requeſt for all who ſhould afterwards believe, *John* 17. 20. Pſal. 19. 6, 7, 8. Pſal. 17. 4. Pſal. 37. 31. Prov. 6. 23.

And here we muſt diſtinctly conſider, that hereby we are made acquainted with the *Nature* and *Neceſſity* of this Sanctification and Cleanſing: And that by Divine Appointment, this is the ordinary *Means* of effecting it. And farther, that herein the Wiſdom of God is honoured, by its exceeding *Fitneſs* to that end.

1. Without the knowledge of this Word, we could not fully have underſtood the loathſom Depravity and Corruption of our Hearts, or the manifold Tranſgreſſions of our Lives. How wretchedly we are Polluted, and how often we Offend; how Defective are our beſt Duties; how ſhort we come of our Rule and Pattern; and what need there is of ſeeking to recover the Divine Image and Life.

This Bleſſed Word inſtructs us, how the Ground of our Sanctification is laid in the Satisfaction of Chriſt: how it is procured, and how we may partake of it: What we owe to the Blood of the Croſs, and what to the Influence of the Divine Spirit. The Treaſury of Heaven was opened by the Sacrifice of Chriſt, that the Holy Spirit might be given to Convince and Convert the World. His *Departure* or *going away*, which comprehend his Death and Aſcenſion, was neceſſary and expedient unto this. Acts 3. 26. John 15.

We are alſo here inſtructed, how this Sanctification is carried on, by our perfecting Holineſs in the Fear of God. For this Water of the Spirit hath a continual Cleanſing Virtue upon all true Chriſtians, until their Purified Souls aſcend to Heaven. He that pitied them when they were in their Pollution, will not leave them after they are Cleanſed, till he hath finiſhed his Work.

It is from this Word that we are acquainted with the *Neceſſity* and *Extent* of this Sanctification, as reaching to *Soul*, *Body*, and *Spirit*. It tells us the very *Mind* and *Conſcience* are defiled; and that there needs not only the Cleanſing of our *Hands*, but the Purifying of our *Hearts*. For the Doctrine of the Grace of God, *teacheth us to deny all Ungodlineſs and Worldly Luſts*; to kill the Luſts of the Eyes, to mortifie the Pride of Life, to crucifie the Deſires of the Fleſh, and bring the Underſtanding and Conſcience, and every Thought into Subjection to the Laws of Chriſt. This tells us what the Filthineſs of *Fleſh* and *Spirit* is, from which we muſt be Cleanſed: and how indiſpenſably neceſſary this is to our Acceptance with God, and our Communion with him. This repreſents the Divine Purity, (which we are to imitate and reſemble,) as every way Amiable and Excellent. As, that the Bleſſed God eſſentially hates every Sin, earneſtly forbids it, and terribly threatens it, and patiently diſſuades us from it, and ſeverely puniſhes it, and hath mercifully ſent his Son to deſtroy the Work of the

Tit.2.11, 12,13,14.

James 4.8.

2 Cor.7.1.

the Devil: Therefore that he *cannot tempt any man to evil*, or neceſſitate and cauſe the Sins of Men, which he warns them againſt on pain of Damnation.

Never was inward Purity ſo preſſed by any * Law before; or the univerſal Sanctification of our Nature advanced to ſuch a pitch. No other Law pretends to reach to the inward Thoughts of the Heart, as thoſe in the Word; which forbids us to Covet, to Luſt, or hate our Brother in our Heart. This ranſacks every filthy Corner, and pierceth into the Secrets and Receſſes of every Man's Breaſt, ſpeaking with abſolute Authority to the very Grounds, Principles, and Ends of every Action; diſſecting the whole Body of Sin, uncovering the inward Ulcers of the Soul, manifeſting that a Luſtful Deſire, impure Mouth, or an unclean Hand, will make a Man polluted before God, and ſtand guilty of the Breach of his Commandment. This Law is exceeding Broad, it forbids not only the ſinful Acts, but the Inſtruments of 'em, what would begin or promote 'em, or is choſen for the Sin's ſake, with relation, or in order to it. This ſhews us whence our Infection did firſt ariſe, tracing it unto its Spring-head, the firſt Apoſtacy from God; manifeſting the

ſpotleſs

* See Dr. *Whitby* of the Certainty of the Chriſtian Faith, 8°. Ch. 10.

ſpotleſs Holineſs of the Divine Majeſty, and his perfect abhorrence of every Sin, ſo as to judge and condemn the inviſible riſings of Diſobedience, and Contrariety to it, in our very *Thoughts*. Yea, by the meaſures of the Goſpel, we are unclean, unleſs we have active Purities. If we are not crucified to the World, we are covetous: we are malicious, and hate our Brother, if we do him not all the Good we can; tho' he have treated us injuriouſly; we diſhonour the Name of Chriſt, if we do not to our utmoſt advance his Glory.

This is that *Light which maketh manifeſt*; Eph. 5.13. diſcovering the Deformity in Sin, which we never ſaw before; and ſo much of it in the Heart, as we never before believed; with the aggravating Spots of many plauſible Duties, and the provoking Circumſtances of our particular Faults. For when we thought our ſelves very *Abſoloms* for Beauty, by looking into this Glaſs, we appear as vile and loathſom as Lepers: and all our Secret Sins, which are always in the Light of God's Countenance, are by the Word ſet in order before us. What is ſaid of the Sun, in the Heavens, is true of this Word, its Circuit is to the Ends of the Earth, and *there is nothing hid from the* Pſal. 19.6. *light and heat thereof.*

2. This may be alſo conſider'd as *the ordinary Means*, which God hath appointed for the cleanſing of our Hearts and Ways. And therefore the Sanctification of the Spirit, and believing of the
1 Pet. 1. 22.
Truth, are joyned together. The Senſe
2 Theſſ. 2. 13.
of ſome particular, more notorious Sin,
Acts 15. 9.
is commonly the firſt means to humble the Soul: When the Charge is brought home by the Word to this or that Perſon, '*Thou art the Man*, or *Thou art the Woman*, who haſt ſcorned and ſlighted the 'Authority of thy Maker, in this or the 'other Inſtance. Thou art the Foolhardy Rebellious Creature, who haſt 'affronted thy Soveraign, who haſt deſpiſed that Goodneſs, which ſhould 'have led thee to Repentance; abuſed 'that Patience, which hath a tendency to 'thy Salvation; rejected that Grace, that 'would have helped thee; and contemned that Redeemer, who ſhed his Blood 'for thee. This Voice of the Lord is powerful, to ſhake the ſtouteſt Cedars; and make a *Felix* on the Bench to tremble, when preached but by a Priſoner at the Bar. They that Crucified the Redeemer, and ſcorned his Doctrine, were pierced to the Heart, and cry out, *Men
1 Cor. 14. 26.
and Brethren, what ſhall we do to be ſaved!*
2 Acts.

Let the boldeſt Sinner, in the midſt of his Senſual Delight, but have the Word apply'd to his Conſcience, a few Syllables of it whiſper'd in his Ear by the Holy Spirit, it will ſtartle, and awaken him, and make him fly from his Lewd Company, and Courſes, as *Abſolom*'s Brethren did from their Feaſt, when they ſaw their Brother *Amnon* murdered at the Table. The Converſion of *Auſtin*, and of many Others, by being brought to fix their Thoughts on ſome particular Paſſage of Scripture, may confirm this. By the Power of this Word, (accompanied with Divine Influence) Sinners are reſcued out of the Hands of Satan, and afterwards kept from his moſt dangerous Temptations. *By the Word of thy Lips, I have kept me from the Path of the Deſtroyer*, Pſal. 17. 4.

By this the Chains of the Devil are knock'd off, and his Captives recovered into the Liberty of God's Service. *You ſhall know the Truth*, and *the Truth ſhall make you free*, John 8. 32. In this *Jordan* the moſt polluted Creatures have been waſhed; and Hearts full of loathſom Filth have been changed into Veſſels of Purity. *Such were ſome of you, but ye are waſhed, but ye are juſtified, but ye are ſanctified*, 1 Cor. 6. 9.

3. This therefore is the moſt *likely*, *fit*, and *proper* Means. For beſides, the Encouragement of theſe Examples to ſeek for Cleanſing, we have others propounded as our *Patterns* to imitate. Sometimes the Bleſſed God himſelf, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that we may not reſt in low Attainments; and ſometimes the Examples of the Saints, that we might not deſpair of being healed. For the ſame powerful Grace that hath ſanctified others, is able to do the like for us. Therefore while our Impotency and Impurity is declared in this Word, we are directed by it to a *Fountain open for Sin, and for Uncleanneſs.* We have Promiſes and Precepts moſt graciouſly connected. What God commands us in one place as our Duty, he promiſeth to do for us by his Spirit, or enable us to do in another; or at leaſt gives us ground to hope he will.

Let us then conſider the exceeding great and precious *Promiſes*, which are the Motives, and Means of our being cleanſed from all Filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. For by them we are made *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, 2 Pet. 1. 4.

It's by this means Divine Impreſſions are made upon the Soul, the obdurate Heart of a Sinner melted and overcome, and transform'd into the Image of God. Compare this *Means* God works by, with the *Subject* to be wrought upon, and the *Effect* to be wrought, and none can be conceived *fitter*. It is the Office of the Word, by Precepts, Promiſes, and Rewards, to inform the Judgment, and awaken Conſcience, and perſwade the Will. It is ſome Encouragement to expect the Influence of the Spirit, in the uſe of this means, becauſe it is ſo excellently fitted to this End, to heal our Impotency; which is not *Natural* but *Moral*. And God would not appoint us Means, which ſhould be altogether in vain.

‘ Grace is tender'd unto Men in the
‘ preaching of the Goſpel, to enable them
‘ to perform, and comply with that
‘ which God requires. For altho' we
‘ know not the Way and Means, of the
‘ effectual Communications of Grace
‘ unto the Souls of Men: *This is cer-*
‘ *tain* *, That Grace is ſo tender'd in the
‘ Preaching of the Goſpel, that none go
‘ without it, none are deſtitute of its
‘ Aids and Aſſiſtance, but thoſe alone

---

* Dr. *O. of the Dominion of Sin and Grace*, p. 14.

‘ who *by a Free Act of their own Wills*, ‘ do refuſe and reject it. *Ye will not* ‘ *come unto me, that you may have Life.* ‘ And all Unbelievers have, or may have ‘ Experience of this in themſelves, that ‘ they do *voluntarily* refuſe the Aſſiſtance ‘ of Grace, which is offer'd for their De‘ liverance. *Therefore is their Deſtru*‘ *ction of themſelves.*—— The common Grace which is generally afforded to them, who live under the Goſpel, extends ſo far, as that they have thereby a *Day* allow'd them to provide for their Peace. Now tho' this Grace is not yet certainly Saving, yet it tends to that which is ſo; and none have cauſe to deſpair, but that being duly improv'd and comply'd with, it may end in it. It is expreſly ſaid to ſuch, (as live under the Goſpel,) they are *to work out their Salvation with Fear and Trembling*, for this reaſon, that God works, or *is working in them*, i. e. ſtatedly and continually is at work, or is alway ready to work in ἔϛιν ὁ ἐνεργῶν. them, *to will and to do, of his own good pleaſure*, 2 Phil. 12,13. *The matter fails not on his part.* He *will* work on in order to Salvation, if *they* work in that way of Subordinate Co-operation, which his Command, and the neceſſity of their own caſe obliged them unto *.—

Let me add, If this Holy Word (animated by the Divine Spirit,) be not effectual to our Sanctification, thoſe means which are more *Extraordinary*, are not like to be ſo, *Pſal.* 78. 22, 23, 24. *They Rebelled againſt God, and would not believe his Word, or Truſt in his Salvation*; *though he commanded the Clouds from above, and opened the Doors of Heaven, and rained Manna for them to Eat, and gave them the Corn of Heaven.* Their Victuals came out of the Clouds, and their Water out of a Rock, and yet theſe Miracles did not Convert them. Neither the Miracles of *Moſes*, or thoſe of our Bleſſed Lord, were ſufficient in their time. In ſome Places our Lord wrought Miracles, and yet they deſired him to be gone out of their Coaſts: And when he was on the Croſs, they jeared him with his Miracles, tho' they could not but acknowledge them; *he ſaved others, himſelf he cannot*; *let him now come down from the Croſs, and we will believe.* After the Miraculous Feeding of Two Thouſand with Five Loaves and Two Little Fiſhes, the People were aſtoniſhed, and ſaid one to another, *This is he that ſhould come*; this doubtleſs is the expected

John 6. 14, 22, 26, 30.

---

* See more to this purpoſe, Mr. *Charnock's* Work, 2d Vol. p. 195, 196, 178, 187. Dr. *Owen* on 3 *Hebr.* p. 70, 71. Mr. *Howe Bleſſedneſs of the R.* 8°. ch. 17. and *Redeemers Tears*, p. 53 *Append.* p. 172. Dr. *Bate's* Serm. x. on Luke 14. 23. 8°. p. 337, 338

expected and long looked for *Meſſias* ; and would have taken him by force, and made him King : And yet I think the very next Day, at leaſt within a Day or Two, when he told them they followed him only for the Loaves, they ſay unto him, *What Sign ſheweſt thou that we ſhould believe?* What work doſt thou? As if he had never wrought a Miracle before. Yea, our Lord hath
Luk.16.31. told us, *If we will not hear* Moſes *and the Prophets, neither would we believe, though one ſhould riſe from the Dead.* Tho' one of your Acquaintance who Periſhed in his Sins, ſhould appear at Midnight in a Frightful Shape, and warn thee in particular by his Example, to take heed of Youthful Luſts, and not continue one Hour longer ſo near to endleſs and intolerable Miſery, as is every Impenitent Sinner? Should he tell thee, that he once made a Mock of Sin, and a Jeſt of Hell, and a Scorn of Godlineſs, as thou doſt? That he did not believe there was ſuch a Holy, Terrible God, as now he finds ; or that it would be ſo fearful a thing to fall into his Hands? but now he feels the Word of God to be true ; and that for a Fooliſh Luſt, he hath the Recompence of a Miſerable Eternity. If ſuch Warnings were given,

they would not awaken Men to Repentance, unto whom the Preaching of the Word is not effectual. We read, that after the Reſurrection of *Lazarus* from the Dead, they that knew him before, and knew he was raiſed again, and Converſed with him afterwards, were not Converted to believe on Chriſt; for *from that very Day* of his Raiſing *Lazarus*, John 11. 53. the High-Prieſts, and Scribes, and Rulers, and People, took Counſel how they might put him to Death. The like may be ſaid concerning the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt himſelf.

And how many do we ſee brought to the very brink of the Grave, within a ſtep of Death and Hell, both in their own Apprehenſion, and in the Judgment of others, who upon an unexpected Recovery, (not unlike a Reſurrection,) have been far from being reclaimed and bettered afterwards? Their forc'd Repentance vaniſheth, when the fear of dying ceaſeth. It is the Miniſtry of the Word, which is the *ordinary* Method that God hath appointed for our Sanctification; and if that be not effectual, theſe extraordinary Methods would not.

*Fourthly*, It remains to be conſidered, That if this Word become the effectual means of our Sanctification, we muſt carefully attend, and *take heed* unto it. Pſ.130.3. The Original imports to *obſerve narrowly*, with great exactneſs; we muſt ſtill have it in our Eye, that we may form our Deſigns, regulate our Affections, and order our Ways accordingly. We Joſh.1.8. muſt carefully preſerve it as a Treaſure, and watchfully obſerve it as a Rule; we muſt *hide it in our Hearts*, verſe 11. A competent knowledge of this Word, and diligent endeavour to encreaſe it, is ma- Heb.2.1. nifeſtly ſuppoſed; and that we *give earneſt heed to the things we read or hear, leſt at any time we let them ſlip*. We muſt ſtudy the Mind of God in the Holy Scriptures; wait on the Publick Preaching of it; conſider its Tendency and Uſe, as able to make us Wiſe unto Salvation. Col.3.16. We ſhould ponder it in our Hearts, and endeavour to preſerve it there, that it Jer.15.16. may cohabit and dwell *with* us, and *in* us, and be unto us *the Joy*, and *Rejoycing of our Hearts* : Yielding up our ſelves unto the Power of Truth, that we may experience its Holy Efficacy to all the Ends for which God hath appointed it.

*Uſe.* 1. What is firſt, and moſt obviouſly to be Collected from what hath been ſaid, is the *Uſefulneſs* and *Neceſſity* of the *Holy Scriptures.* What excellent Knowledge may be found there, for the cure of our Ignorance? What Sanctifying Influence, for the purifying of our Hearts and Ways? What Eſtabliſhment and Strength to fix our Wavering Minds, and heal our Unſettledneſs? How certain and Divine are its Inſtructions? How Pure and Spiritual, and yet Plain and Expreſs, are its Precepts? What pungent and ſmart Reproofs? what inviting Promiſes and Examples? what terrifying Threatnings, are imployed in this Word? to lead us into the way of Life, and ſave us from the Paths of the Deſtroyer? How fitly do the Effects of it anſwer its Name? of *the Power of God,* 1 Cor. 1.18 and *the Rod of his Strength, the Power* Rom. 1.16. *of God to the Salvation of the Soul? It is* Pſal. 110.2. *quick and powerful, ſharper than a Two-* Heb. 4.12. *edged Sword,* to pierce and wound by Conviction. It is the *Word of God's Grace,* to heal thoſe Wounds; *able to* Act. 20.32. *build us up, and give us an Inheritance a-* 1 Tim. 2. 3. *mong them that are Sanctified.* What Sins are to be avoided, how Temptations are to be reſiſted, how Boſom Luſts are to be Mortified, and a Pure, Acceptable Worſhip to be performed, and what otherwiſe is neceſſary to the pleaſing of God, and Communion with him, is taught us in this Word. By many Precepts and Commands of Duty; by various Motives, or Arguments of Perſwaſion; and by the beſt Patterns, and Examples of Holineſs.

Hereby we are acquainted with our Sin and Miſery, and told the only way of our Recovery and Happineſs. The Malicious Arts and Stratagems of the Devil are here unfolded: Hence we are inſtructed how to conceive of God, how to approach to him, converſe with him, and reſemble him. Our Steps are hereby directed by unerring Light; our Purpoſes ſettled, and our Courſe ſtated; and Directions given us how to uſe our Selves, and all we have for the Service of our Maker, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. By taking heed to this Light, we are ſafely led out of thoſe Labyrinths, where others have loſt their way, and may prevent ſtumbling into the Pit of Deſtruction, into which others fall. All the Doctrines and Precepts of this Word, tend to our Healing and Recovery; to promote the perfection and felicity of our Nature; to bring us to the beſt kind of *Life* for the preſent, in reſpect of Duty to God, Comfort to our Selves, and Uſefulneſs unto others: And this in the Expectation of the Heavenly Reward:

enabling us in ſome meaſure to partake of the Earneſt, and enjoy the Fore-taſts of it.

In ſhort, It is by this Word that we believe in Chriſt, and have hope towards God, and are enabled to love him, and ſo to dwell in Love. Our *Faith*, our *Hope*, our *Love* to God and Chriſt, are all begun, cheriſhed and maintained by the influence of this Word. To this we owe that *Faith* whereby we are vitally united to the Son of God; that *Hope* whereby all our Grace flouriſheth; and that *Love* whereby we are Fruitful. For as by Faith we have a Spiritual Life, by Hope we gather Strength, and by Love we become active in all the Fruits of Holy Obedience.

2. This will juſtifie the extraordinary *Eſteem* and *Affection* that Good Men have for *the Word of God.* Who, after ſuch Experience of its cleanſing Virtue, but muſt profeſs, that the Sayings of this Book are *Faithful*, and *True*, and *Worthy of all Acceptation? more to be deſired than Gold, than much Fine Gold, ſweeter than the Honey and the Honey-Comb? O how love I thy Law!* ſaith *David, It is my Meditation all the Day. I will never forget thy Precepts, for by them thou haſt quickened me.* O that this

Pſal. 119. 93, 97.

this Law might be continually within my Heart, to enlighten, counſel and refreſh me! that it may dwell richly in me; be always *an Ornament of Grace to my Head, and a Chain of Gold about my Neck; Health to my Navel, and Marrow to my Bones!* I heard its Voice, I felt its Power, and beheld its glorious Beauty, and ſo have been changed into the ſame Image; and ſhall I not love it? If any ſhould ſeem to wonder, and think ſuch Eſtimations and Affections ſtrange, you may anſwer with the Man born Blind, *John* 9. 30. *This is a marvellous thing, that you know not what it is*, or why I ſo much prize and love it, when *it hath opened my Eyes.* I was Spiritually Dead and Defiled, and by this Word I received quickning and cleanſing. No wonder therefore, if I account all things but Droſs and Dung in compariſon of this Knowledge.

Yea, by all of us ſhould this be eſteemed an Invaluable Treaſure. Other Laws, provide not ſufficient Help for the Practice and Performance of the Duties required; but with the Word of God, there is *a Quickning Spirit*, to incline the Heart to do, what is directed; to ſubdue our Paſſions, to overcome our Temptations, to enable us heartily to reſolve,

ſolve, and accordingly to perform. We have the Promiſe of *the Holy Spirit of God*, to thoſe that ask it, to guide us in the Way of Righteouſneſs, and to enable us to perſevere. *I have ſeen an End of all Perfection*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *but thy Law is exceeding broad.* Pſ.119.96. Every Earthly Perfection has its Bounds and Limits, both as to its Nature, Uſe, and Duration; but there is an Unconceivable Amplitude, and Extent in the Word of God. 'Tis of Univerſal Uſe to all Perſons, in all Conditions; to inform, to guide, to cleanſe, and heal, to eſtabliſh, recover, quicken and comfort, ſanctifie, and ſave, to reſolve all Doubts, anſwer all Deſires, and ſuit all the Numberleſs Variety of Caſes, wherein we can need Aſſiſtance in this World; to bring us into the Favour of God, and keep us ſo; to govern our Spirits, and regulate our Lives, ſo as to make us happy here, and hereafter. *It is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Coroection of Manners, for Instruction in Righteouſneſs*; 2Tim.3.16 for preſent Peace, and for Eternal Salvation.

It is *a Letter from Heaven*; and how valuable ſhould that Conſideration make it, eſpecially conſidering the Contents, and Errand of it. Let us imagine a Man to have a Letter ſent him from an Earthly ly King, or ſome great Prince, wherein he ſhould have Pardon granted him for ſome Capital Crime, and High Offence, which had made him liable to a terrible Death. Or that by ſuch a Letter he was forewarned of ſome imminent Danger hanging over his Head. Or that hereby, he ſhould have aſſur'd, and confirm'd to him, under the King's Seal, ſome rich Donation, or great Lordſhip. If any of theſe Favours ſhould be conveyed to a Man, by a Letter from ſome High and Mighty Prince upon Earth, how thankfully would he receive and accept it? How highly value it? How often would he read it? How warily would he keep it?

Are not all theſe, and a Thouſand greater Comforts, conveyed to us by *the Word of God*; that Royal and Sacred Letter, ſent from the King of Heaven and Earth; wherein we are forewarned, leſt by our Ignorance, Impenitence, and Unbelief, we fall into the Pit of Hell, and Everlaſting Deſtruction. And 'tis there we have promiſed and performed to us, the Pardon and Remiſſion of all our Sins, by which we juſtly ſtand Guilty of the Second Death, and are liable to the Endleſs Torments of the Damned. By this Bleſſed Word, we are not only comforted, with Grace, in this World, but have the Aſſurance of being Crowned with Glory and Immortality, in the World to come. Such a Letter as this, has the moſt Glorious God ſent unto us Miſerable Men: How ſhould we eſteem, and value his Holy Word!

What *Thankfulneſs* ſhould they expreſs, whoſe Hearts have been ſeaſoned with Holy Principles and Affections *betimes*; and their Way cleanſed by the Word of God? If through the Knowledge of Chriſt, you have eſcaped the Pollutions that are in the World, through Youthful Luſts, (when ſo many others are thereby Drowned in the Gulph of Perdition,) ſhould you not be very Thankful? When you behold Multitudes who wallow in the Mire, and take Pleaſure in the Ways of Sin, are regardleſs of God and Chriſt, and the Eternal World: You may ſay, I was as Mad as they, or ſhould certainly have been ſo, if Free Grace had not prevented. What Gratitude do I owe to my Redeemer, and his mighty Spirit, who makes me thus to differ! Many of you can look back with Joy and Praiſe upon the *Early Experience* you have had of this kind.

You can reflect how *early* God began with your Souls, *ſo early*, that your Baptiſm ſeemed to have had its effects and influence preſently; *ſo early* with Some, that you cannot tell the very time when God firſt began. Others can remember the Special Inſtruments whom God imployed from time to time to do them good; by what careful and prudent Education, by what uſeful Examples of Holy and Affectionate Relations, by what convincing Sermons, by what awakening Providences, by what repeated Motions and Strivings of the Spirit of Grace, you were brought to the knowledge of your Sin and Duty, and enabled to own and avow your *Baptiſmal Covenant*, and ſeriouſly out of choice come under the Bond of it. To which purpoſe *David* acknowledgeth God, *Pſal.* 16. 2, 7. '*O my Soul, 'thou haſt ſaid to the Lord, thou art my 'Lord, therefore I will bleſs thee, who 'haſt given me Counſel*, and enabled me 'to receive it; who haſt enlightened my 'Darkneſs, removed my Prejudices, 'cleanſed me from my Pollutions, ſoftned my hard Heart, ſubdued my Enmity and Diſaffection to thee, and 'made me willing in the Day of thy 'Power, to come to Chriſt that I might 'have Life and Healing by him. *Lord, 'how*

Prov.4.4.
Ch.5.3,4.

‘ *how is it that thou doſt manifeſt thy Self* ‘ *to me, and not unto the World!* That I ‘ ſhould be quickned and cleanſed, while ‘ others are left under Spiritual Defile‘ment and Death.

4. What need have *Superiours* to be careful and diligent to bring *Young Perſons* under their Charge, acquainted with the *Word of God?* It is mentioned, not only to the Praiſe of Young *Timothy*, but of thoſe who were concerned in his Education, that *he knew the Holy Scriptures from his Childhood*; *i. e.* thoſe of the Old Teſtament; for ſcarce any other were then written when he was a Child. He was alſo acquainted with what was neceſſary to be known concerning *Chriſt*, as is mentioned in the ſame Verſe, under the Expreſſion of *the Faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus.* Women and Children had then the Scriptures in a Language they underſtood; for his Grandmother *Lois* and his Mother *Eunice* inſtructed him very early in the Knowledge of God and Chriſt. 1 Tim. 3. 15.

The Debauchery of Youth is very much owing to the want of good Principles inſtilled into their Minds in their Tender Years: By that means they are a more eaſie Prey to the Devil; having little or nothing to oppoſe, to the Snares

he

he lays for them, or to their own corrupt Inclinations. You therefore that give up your Children to God by Baptiſm in Infancy, you ſeem to profeſs a Deſire they ſhould be *his* as ſoon as *yours*; you ſolemnly ingage and promiſe to bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord; but how falſe to God and them muſt you appear, if you do not ſeaſon them with Holy Principles betimes! Tho' you know they have Immortal Souls to Save, and an Eternal Bleſſedneſs to obtain, and endleſs Miſery to Eſcape, will you yet bring them up in *Ignorance*, without that neceſſary Knowledge that muſt make them wiſe to Salvation? If you do not inſtruct them in the Rules and Obligations of their Duty, that they may *know the God of their Fathers, and ſerve him with a perfect Heart.* If you do not mind them of the Evil of Sin, the Uncertainty of this Life, and the Aſſurance of an Everlaſting State; of the Truth, and Conſequences of the Fall of Man, of the Way of our Reconciliation to God, and the Participation of his Image, *&c.* If you do not inculcate theſe plain and neceſſary Truths upon them; if you do not bring them to the Publick Worſhip; teach them how to ſpend the Lord's Day;

2 Chron. 28.9.

Day; obſerve their particular Tempers, Corruptions, and Temptations, and apply your ſelves accordingly with Wiſdom and Seriouſneſs for their good.

Of all others you have the moſt Power over them, and Intereſt in them; none have ſuch Advantages and Opportunities to inſtruct and perſwade them as you. None are under ſo many Obligations of Duty, and Intereſt of every ſort as you. It is therefore Unnatural and Unexcuſable to neglect it *.

You are not eaſily Apprehenſive how much your preſent Comfort is concerned in it; for if while they are Young, you are negligent in *your* Duty to them, they are likely enough when grown up, to fail of *theirs* to you. And it is but juſt they ſhould not know their Duty to *You*, if you do not inſtruct them in theirs to *God*. Theſe *Arrows* (to which they are compared in Scripture, and happy is he that hath his Quiver full of them,) ſhould be directed right at firſt, for accordingly they are like to Fly afterwards. It may fall out otherwiſe, but uſually the gracious or vicious Habits of the firſt Age are tranſmitted to the next; and the after Converſation is ſuitable to the Education of Childhood and Youth. Beſides the Sin and Miſchief

Prov. 22.6.
Deut. 14.9.
-----11.19.

---

* I have ſaid more of this in Three Letters of *Family Religion* 12°. 1694.

which you may prevent. For we know not at what Period of Time a Child comes firſt to the uſe of *Reaſon*, and therefore cannot tell when God doth, or doth not impute their Childiſh Follies, or what Impreſſions they may leave: If he do not unto Damnation, he may ſo as to cauſe a Sickneſs, or an haſty Death. Therefore as ſoon as they are capable of Learning, they ſhould be Taught; and as ſoon as capable of Laws, (I mean the Laws of Parents and Tutors,)they ſhould be reſtrained: and before that, they ſhould be reſtrained from the material Parts of any Evil, even from *Evil Words*, which they underſtand not: for having once learnt the ſound, they will quickly perceive the Senſe. They can Underſtand Fear, as ſoon as learn to Sin: And he that will let Children alone till they have a fixed ſettled Judgment, will find good Counſel come too late.

Before I diſmiſs this Head, let me mind you that are *Maſters of Families*, that you ought thus carefully to inſtruct your Younger Servants, the care of whoſe Souls is committed to you by the Providence of God: Your own Safety and Comfort, and the good Succeſs of your Civil Affairs, is concerned in it, as well as your Duty. * An Eminent Preacher in his time, upon a like occaſion, in a Sermon at *Aldermanbury*, made mention of a memorable Paſſage to this purpoſe. That in the beginning of the *Iriſh Rebellion*, there were ſome Popiſh *Servants* cut the Throats of thoſe who had formerly been their *Maſters*, telling them that *they ſhould have taught them better*.

Somewhat of *Direction* and *Counſel* I would now add unto the *Younger ſort*. Let me therefore beſeech you,

*Firſt*, To make a Pauſe, to ſtop a while, and bethink your ſelves: Employ ſome time in a ſerious Conſideration of your Hearts and Ways, according to this Word of God. Think, what ſort of Creatures you are, and how you came into this World? Who was the Author of your Beings, and the Original of all things? What did he make you for? but to Glorifie and Enjoy him? How wretchedly uncapable you have rendered your ſelves of both? And in order to your Relief, what is to be done on your part, and what may be hoped for on God's; and how remedileſs your Caſe is, if this Affair be not begun to be tranſacted before the only time is paſt, wherein it may be done. O try your Reaſon, and uſe it in ſuch Reflections. Think in

* Mr. *H. Palmer*. Dr. *H.Wilkinſon*, on Job 13.26. *p.*17.

in what a Condition you were born; how you have lived; what you have done, and what you now are; whither you are going, and where you muſt ſhortly be. Think what your ſinful Folly hath already coſt you; what you have loſt, and the manifold Hurts and Miſchiefs you have received by it. What unthrifty Bargains you have made, and what is the bitter Fruit of thoſe things whereof you are now aſhamed. The Devil himſelf cannot perſwade you, but *you muſt Die*; and you dare not ſay or think that there is not an everlaſting *Heaven* or *Hell:* You therefore ſometimes wiſh to die the Death of the Righteous. And will you not conſider a little, how impoſſible *that* is, without being like them while you live?

*Secondly*, Endeavour clearer *Apprehenſions*, and a better *Underſtanding* of the *Religion* you profeſs, as to the Evidence of its Principles, the Nature, Grounds and Reaſons of it. That you may know your own Caſe, and what it is to be a Chriſtian, and what the neceſſary Change does imply, and how it is to be wrought. That you may know the *God* from whom you have revolted; whom you are to obey as your Soveraign Ruler, and to enjoy as your chief Good. That you may know the *Saviour*, that muſt befriend you for the Pardon of Sin; and for Eternal Life. That you may know the *Holy Ghoſt*, the Sanctifier, by whom you muſt be Enlightened, Quickened, and Renewed. How can you love and obey your Maker, if you know him not? what he is, and how he will be ſerved? How can you believe in Chriſt, if you know not who he is, or what he hath Done and Suffered, Purchaſed, Promiſed, Offered, Prepared, and is ready to be, and do, and give? How can you bewail your Sin and Miſery? Loath your ſelves, and ſeek for Grace, if you continue Ignorant of ſuch things as theſe? It is by the Light of Holy Knowledge you muſt be recovered; you are *loſt* and periſhing, while this *Goſpel is hid* from you. 2 Cor. 3.4. If you are not ſenſible of your own Ignorance and Diſeaſe, and where is the Remedy; how will you come to Chriſt, as your Teacher and Phyſician?

*Thirdly*, To this end, diligently *ſtudy the Holy Scriptures*, and attend the *Publick Preaching* of the Word, *with ſuitable Deſires and Deſigns*. Deut. 17.18 Apprehend the weight of the matters treated of, and know that it is for your Life: You know not the advantage of an affectionate Study of the Holy Scriptures. While the *Ethiopian Eunuch* was reading Acts 8. 26.

ing in the Prophet *Iſaiah*, though he underſtood it not, God did ſo far reward and bleſs him, that he ſent *Philip* to inſtruct him farther; and his Converſion to the Faith was the Iſſue of it. When ever you hear the Word Preached, remember in whoſe Name, and upon what Errand, the Meſſage comes.

Therefore lay aſide every Prejudice, and place your ſelves as under the Eye of your All-ſeeing Judge. We that ſpeak to you in the Name of the Lord, have very much to blame our ſelves for, God knows, that we are not Serious enough, and Compaſſionate enough to the Souls of Men: (not adapting our ſelves to the Capacities and Neceſſities of the Younger and more Ignorant ſort.) Alas! we ſee and know but little, and feel leſs of the great important things we ſpeak of. And though we hope we find Mercy to be Faithful, yet how ſhort do we come of that Affection and Vigour, and ſerious Importunity, which the caſe of Sinful Periſhing Souls doth need? How unlike thoſe that know the Terrors of the Lord, the value of an Immortal Soul, and the nearneſs of *Eternity*? How unbecoming thoſe who ſpeak every Lord's Day unto Men and Women, unto whom *we* may *never* ſpeak more? And it may

Jam. 1.21.
Luk. 8.18.
Act. 10.33.

be ſuch and ſuch of *you* ſhall never hear a Sermon more; take heed therefore how you hear.

*Fourthly*, Be moſt *Importunate* with God for *the Spirit of Holineſs and Sanctification.* He alone can reſtore Life to thy Dead Soul, and conquer the Enmity of thy Heart againſt Holineſs. *For we are Saved by the Waſhing of Regeneration, and by the Renewing of the Holy Ghoſt*, 3 Tit. 5. Beg the Holy Spirit, with an Earneſtneſs anſwerable to your Neceſſity of what you ask; that he may be a Living Principle, to cauſe you to walk in his Statutes, and keep his Commandments. Ezek. 36. 26,27. Forgiveneſs of Sin is not all that you need; you are Diſeaſed and Defiled, and need to be Cured and Cleanſed. If you ask the Holy Spirit with an Apprehenſion, and Feeling of your need of his powerful Influence, you may ſupplicate and plead the Promiſe in Hope, that God will more readily grant you, than any Father upon Earth gives Bread to his Children. *They that ſeek him early and earneſtly, ſhall find him.* Matth. 5. 6. *They that hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, ſhall be filled.* Chap. 7. 11. Our Saviour hath promiſed, that God will give good things to them that ask, even *his Holy Spirit*, with a *much more* than Men give good Gifts to their Children, *Matth.* 7.11. He denies us not Strength to perform what he Commands, if we diligently ſeek it at his Hands. You comply with his Grace by Prayer , and he will give it to them, who heartily deſire and beg it. Beſeech him to Renew you by his Grace in the Spirit of your Minds; to recover you to the Divine Image, that you may anſwer the End of your Creation, and live to his Glory in Newneſs of Life. Plead his Power, and Promiſe to do it; *to take away the Stony Heart* , *to give you a New Heart*, *and a New Spirit*. 'Tis for this very thing *he will be enquired of* by you, *Ezek.* 36. 37. Our Lord is exalted to give Repentance, and Saving Faith ; his Powerful Grace can ſubdue the moſt Impetuous Luſts of Youth. You may be earneſt and importunate with God for theſe things; he does not require or expect you ſhould be contented to periſh in your Filthineſs and Unbelief, deſpairing of Help, as if the Caſe of Man were like that of Devils: He requires you to Hope, and is pleaſed with it.

And if you find any Motions and Strivings of this Bleſſed Spirit, in anſwer to Prayer, cheriſh every Beginning of it, as an earneſt of more. Be thankful for every Beam of Heavenly Light, from the God of all Grace; it may prove the dawning of a more perfect Day. Beg that this mighty Spirit would open your *Eyes* and *Hearts*, that being convinced of the Certainty and Reality of the Goſpel Revelation, by the view of its ſuitableneſs to your Caſe, and the many glorious Advantages that are offered by it, you may be brought to love it as Amiable; and yield up your ſelves entirely in compliance with it.

*Fifthly*, Solemnly devote and give up your ſelves to God, according to your Baptiſmal Covenant: Humbly and Thankfully accepting his offered Grace and Favour; and ſeriouſly reſigning your ſelves, to Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, as your God: To believe, and love, and ſerve, and glorifie him all your days, in hope of his promiſed, everlaſting Salvation.

*Sixthly*, Take heed of *Declining* after good and *hopeful Beginnings*. How many Young Perſons have begun in the Spirit, and ended in the Fleſh? Light hath ſhone in upon their Minds; they have been under awakening Convictions by the Word; ſtrong Affections have been excited by it; they delighted to hear and read it; they kept up a Courſe of

Secret Prayer for ſome time,*&c.* and yet have afterwards fallen away to a vicious Life. It may be they had not conſidered, and counted the coſt of being Reſclved Chriſtians; what they muſt abandon and forſake; what pleaſing Temptations they muſt avoid and reſiſt; what Inſtances of Self-denial they muſt conſent to, *&c.* And therefore by the Sollicitation, or Sophiſtry, or Jears of their Old Companions, through the Subtilty of Satan, and the Power of Youthful Luſts, they have been entangled again with the Pollutions of the World, and the Strong Man hath re-enter'd the Houſe, with Seven Evil Spirits worſe than himſelf.

How Miſerable is the Caſe of ſuch, after they have been enlightned, and in part delivered, who return to their former Bondage, and are *led Captive by the Devil at his Will!* They were not far from the Kingdom of God; they ſeemed to conſent to be the Lord's; they were almoſt perſwaded to take the Yoke of Chriſt upon them, as his reſolved Followers: but now have taken leave of him, and are at the Command of Satan; *his Will is theirs:* If he bid them think as little of God as they can, deſpiſe the Holy Scripture, make light of 2 Tim. 2. 26.

Sabbaths and Sermons, and all good Counſel, *they do it.* If he bid them gratifie their Carnal Appetites, indulge their Senſual Inclinations, and frequent ſuch and ſuch enſnaring Company, *they do it.* They are led Captive by him *at his Will.* With what Hearty Compaſſion ſhould we think and ſpeak of the Caſe of ſuch! And many ſuch there be. But if you are not harden'd through the deceitfulneſs of Sin, paſt all feeling, I would fain ask you, Whether you are not yet *willing* to Return? If Mercy may be had, and you may yet be recovered out of the Snare of the Devil: Dare you ſolemnly and expreſly in ſo many Words, take leave of Chriſt, and bid him farewel for ever? Are you content to forfeit his Favour, and throw up all Hopes of it, and venture his Eternal Diſpleaſure? Would you not yet return, if God would receive you? If there be Balm in *Gilead*, and a Phyſician there, that you may be healed? May I not tell you, in the Name of Chriſt, that *there is*; and that if you return with your whole Heart, (you eſpecially, who are the Children of Holy Parents,) he will yet receive you: He will meet you half way, and bid you welcom. He will heal your Backſlidings, and blot out your Tranſgreſſions, and re- Hoſ.14.1, 2,3. Iſa.55.6,7, 8.

member

member your Iniquities no more. He pawns the Authority of his own Great Name for this, *Three* ſeveral times in one Verſe, to aſſure you of it, *Zach.*1.3. Prov.1.23. *Turn ye at my Reproof, and I will pour out my Spirit upon you*, is the Voice of Wiſdom.

I might likewiſe direct you in your Addreſſes to God for his Purifying Grace, to Eye *the Blood of* * *Chriſt*, as the procuring Cauſe of your Sanctification; and the *Holy Spirit*, the Purchaſe of that Blood, as the great Sanctifier of Souls. I might urge you farther, * that with an hearty abhorrence of every Sin, you would penitently and thankfully renew the *Covenant* you made with God in your *Baptiſm, yielding your ſelves to the Lord*, as the moſt Solemn and Important Tranſaction of your whole Lives. And be ſure * keep out of the way of *Temptation* as much as you can, endeavouring to avoid thoſe particular Snares by which you are moſt eaſily overcome. Pretend not a Reſolution againſt the Sin, if you are willing to look upon the Temptation; to walk upon the brink of the River, and to come near the Door of that Houſe, into which you know you muſt not enter. It is impoſſible a Man ſhould love to abide by a Temptation for a good End, or without unſpeakable Hazard. It is vain Confidence on your own Strength, to come as near Sin as you durſt, and the Event does commonly prove it ſo. Eſpecially * ſee that you well imploy your Time upon *the Lords Day*; and take heed to your * *Company* all the Week. Few of the Younger ſort Miſcarry, but date their Sin and Ruin from the neglect of this Counſel. * Begin with God every *Morning*, by ſerious *Prayer*, and Reading ſome part of the *Holy Scriptures*, with ſome Practical Affectionate Book, if but for a quarter of an Hour; it would leave a ſerious Tincture on the Mind, and a good Savour on the Heart, and be of uſe to antidote you againſt Temptation, and to preſerve a Holy Frame all the Day. But * never deſiſt your diligent *Endeavours*, till you come to *walk with God* in his Love and Fear, and as under his Eye, all the Day long: That the pleaſing of God may become the Buſineſs, and Pleaſure of your Lives.

*Laſtly*, Do not *delay* Compliance with theſe Counſels, but preſently ſet about it. Can you begin too ſoon to cleanſe your Hearts and Ways? Is it *too ſoon* to be Reconciled to God, and delivered from the Danger of Damnation? Can you attain Peace of Conſcience, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt, and a well grounded Hope of Eternal Life *too ſoon*? If you languiſh'd under a noiſom Diſtemper that threatned your Life, would you imagin you could be healed too ſoon? And how much Sin and Miſchief, Shame and Sorrow, and bitter Repentance may you prevent, by taking heed unto the Word of God betimes? Will you leave the moſt Neceſſary Work of your Life to a Peradventure? Can you be Certain of Life and Health to morrow? Your preſent Duty and Gratitude to God, your Intereſt and Advantage as to your ſelves, on all accounts, oblige you to a preſent Compliance with the Call of God. How much larger Opportunities for the glorifying of God, have *Young Converts*, than *late* Penitents, though they be Sincere? What Advantages never to be retrieved have they loſt, who have out-ſinned their Youth? becauſe their Time is gone, and can never be recalled. What Honour may you bring to God, who remember your Creator in the Days of your Youth? What Ornaments to your Profeſſion may you prove? Of what Uſefulneſs unto others in this World? being filled with the Spirit of God. What Attainments in Grace, and the Knowledge of Chriſt, and what additional Degrees of Glory may you reach? You may grow to a greater Stature, being new born in Youth, and bring forth more and better Fruit in Old Age: You will have a longer time of Peace of Conſcience, and of the Comforts of the Spirit; much ſweeter fore-taſts of Heaven, and improved meetneſs for it. You may lay up Treaſures of Experience to confute the Devil, if he aſſault you on a Death-Bed, *&c.*

See Mr. *Charnock*, Vol. 2. p. 57, 58.

And is it nothing to deſpiſe all theſe Advantages of an Early Piety? to ſecure the Comfort and Uſefulneſs of the future part of your Lives? Is it nothing to be prepared for a ſudden Death? and to provide againſt the Pangs and Sorrowful Reflections of a Death-bed? Is it nothing, when you come to Dye, to review your former Life with Joy? ſaying, *Lord! remember how I have ſerved thee, the God of my Fathers, from my Childhood*, and *Youth!* Is it nothing to bring God greater Glory in this World? and receive a more weighty and ſparkling Crown of Glory in the next? Have you not been often told, how much more difficult your Repentance and Converſion to God will hereafter be, than now, if you ſhould be ſpared ſome Years longer?

ger? Are your Hearts like to be better by longer continuance in Sin? Will the Juſtice of God be leſs provoked? will it not be more? Is it to argue like Men? to ſay I can't bring my ſelf to mind Religion, and my Soul, and another World, *as yet*, but hereafter I will, when I am more Averſe, and Diſinclin'd. I can't leave and hate my ſin *now*, but I hope I ſhall, when I love it more. I find it too *difficult* now, I'le let it alone till the difficulty is much greater. Will the Devil have leſs advantage againſt you, when he hath had ſo much longer Poſſeſſion? *To Day, while it is called to Day, if you will hear his Voice, harden not your hearts.* It is ſome hardning of your Hearts, not to hearken to his Voice *this Day:* It is one ſtep more towards final Impenitence and Unbelief, againſt which there is no Remedy provided in the Goſpel. How hardly was that Man Cured, who was poſſeſſed with a Devil from his Childhood? The more you are alienated from the Life of God, the harder will be your Recovery. Mark 9.29.

And how much greater is the Provocation againſt God, by every ſuch Delay? How aggravated and diſpleaſing is your baſe Ingratitude againſt the Bleſſed God, and a Merciful Redeemer?

You reject his preſent Call, ſlight his Kindneſs, and refuſe his Love, and in effect tell him, that though you have no mind to periſh, but that one time or other before you dye, you will accept it; that yet you have other Buſineſs for the preſent to mind; it will be time enough for that, when you are more at leiſure. Your Youthful Luſts now call you, your Secular Affairs and Settlement in the World now call you to other Thoughts; and *theſe* ſhall be *firſt* minded and ſerved. Your Compaſſionate Phyſician offers his Help, and promiſes a Cure, if you will but hearken and ſubmit to him: You tell him in effect, that you like your Leproſie, and are in love with your Diſeaſe: You care not to be recovered to Health: you will not as yet be Purged and Healed; though one time or other you intend to call for his Aſſiſtance. May he not moſt juſtly ſay unto you, *Let him that is filthy, be filthy ſtill. You would not be purged from your filthineſs, therefore you ſhall not, till you dye.*

How bitter will be the Thoughts of theſe repeated Calls neglected? What cold Horror, and Shivering Dread ſhall ſeize thee on a Bed of Languiſhing? which ſome may take for *true Repentance.* But, Oh how little of *that*, which by a large Charity we hope is ſo, may the Righteous God accept? and who can tell whether he does or no? For ſuch Men ſee themſelves upon the brink of the Grave, and ſtepping into Hell, and know it as much as their Souls are worth, preſently to make Peace with God by unfeigned Repentance.

No wonder then if they let fall ſome little *D*rops of a beginning Sorrow; if they have ſome extorted Reſolutions of Living better; ſome ſudden Remorſe and Regret for thoſe Sins, that they are now like to be Damned for; ſome quick and raſh Vows of an Awaken'd Conſcience; with ſome Confuſion of Face under the Fears of Death and Judgment. But at ſuch a time, it is hard to diſtinguiſh between Religious Sighs and Natural Groans; or ſeparate their Repenting Cries for Mercy, from their Howlings on their Beds through Bodily Pain. 'Tis true, God may work Miracles of Mercy on ſuch Convinced Sinners, who did not ſeek to him till the *Eleventh* Hour; but whether he will or no, there is no Certainty or Probability, but that he can, if he pleaſe; which to Perſons in that Condition, who fear an Everlaſting Hell the next Hour, is a ſad uncomfortable Thought. No Man in his Wits, that reads the Bible, would run the Hazard.

If they have the uſe of Reaſon, and are not harden'd in Atheiſm and Infidelity, they cannot but fear and tremble: Peace and Proſperity may tranſport Men; the Mouth of *Conſcience* may be ſtop'd in Health by falſe Principles, and the Voice of Flattering Company; its ſecret Whiſpers may be drown'd by the noiſe and hurry of Buſineſs, or diverted, brib'd, and abus'd by the Entertainments of Senſe, and the Deceitfulneſs of Riches. But in Sickneſs and Affliction, when diſ-intangled from its Fetters, Conſcience will ſpeak its own Senſe; and it ever ſpeaks loudeſt in a time of Calamity: Then it will witneſs and accuſe, condemn and terrifie. All their Arts of Oblivion cannot make it ſilent; it will diſquiet them with Fears and Torments, which encreaſe at the approach of *Death*, and after Death are the beginning of *Hell*. For though, as one ſays, *That* may not be fully open'd till the laſt Judgment, yet the Anguiſh of *Conſcience* is a part of Hell-fire, preparatory to the Horrible Sentence of Dooms-day.

Now, Is he *his own Murderer*, who would not endeavour to make Peace with God, when in danger of approaching Death? The like is he, who will defer this for *one Day*, becauſe every Day of ſuch delay is a Day of Danger; and ſo is he obliged by the ſame Care for himſelf, and concern for his Soul, if he Sinned Yeſterday, to Repent to Day, leſt he be Dead to Morrow. For how many Perſons dye ſuddenly? (many have done ſo of late, and more may;) and who knows that he ſhall not? Thy Sick Neighbour may recover and live many Years, and he that is now in Health, may expire the next Hour. You are alſo uncertain of tedious Sickneſs, to afford you the lingering forerunners of Death; or of ſuch a one, as ſhall not diſturb the Brain, and unfit for ſerious Thoughts. The firſt Symptom of your laſt Sickneſs, may conclude your Life; you may not have time to complain or cry. *Job* 36. 13, 14. *They cry not when he bindeth them, they dye in their Youth, and their Life is among the Unclean.*

How groundleſs are the Expectations of arriving to Old Age? The Almond-Tree does not every where flouriſh. Hardly One or Two of a great Multitude, lay down a Hoary Head in the Bed of the Grave. Very little Ripe Fruit is gathered into the Basket, in compariſon of the many Bloſſoms that fall to the Ground. Is not your Conſtitution in Youth more tender? and conſequently more ſubject to external Impreſſions, that may cauſe Sickneſs: While grown Branches can ſtand the ſhock of a Cold Winter, every Blaſt or Storm will ſpoil the Beauty of new blown Flowers. And yet though you know this, and therefore muſt grant your length of Days no ſurer than that of others, and your preſuming on the future equally hazardous, and without ground; you will not *now* Repent, and turn to God. It may be you Reſolve you *will*, if you live till *hereafter*; that is, you are content to be Damned if you die before that time: And *who knows what a Day may bring forth?* Prov.27.1. Jam. 4.14.

Though you are now Strong and Healthful, in the Heat and Wantonneſs of Youthful Blood, or in the Strength and Vigour of your Age, and begin to have a throng of Worldly Buſineſs, may not the ſame be ſaid of ſome of thoſe who died the laſt Week? who it may be delayed their Repentance on the like grounds, and thought their own Death as improbable as you do yours; which is now ſo much the nearer, by how many Days you have ſurviv'd them. Is there any of you but would willingly Repent, and turn to God, one Day before you dye? And who can be ſure to do that, who delays till *to Morrow*? I perſwade my ſelf, you cannot think that you ſhall be exempted from appearing before the Bar of Chriſt, if you dye in Youth: Or that thoſe Luſts and Sins that are Damning to Men of Forty, will not be reckon'd for by God, or hereafter puniſh'd, becauſe committed by one of Sixteen. Will you yet boldly put it to the venture? and *Rejoyce O Young Man* Eccl. 9.11. *in thy Youth, and walk in the way of thy own Heart, and neither know nor conſider, that for all theſe things God will bring thee to Judgment.* And how ſoon may you receive that Summons? every whit as ſoon as if you had lived many Years longer. To ſeveral Diſeaſes *You* are more obnoxious than Elder Perſons, to ſome that are now Reigning, and often prove Mortal, as you are more full of warm Blood, to catch the Infection; particularly the *Small Pox*.

By which Diſtemper it pleaſed God to viſit *this young Gentleman*, Mr. *Richard Walter*, in the Eighteenth Year of his Age; concerning whom, (as it will not be needful, ſo) it cannot be expected I ſhould ſpeak much, being almoſt a Stranger to him, till the laſt Scene of his Life. When I was requeſted to joyn with ſome

Friends in Prayer for him, and afterwards at his own Deſire viſited him, and prayed with him. I found him in a very Penitent and Serious Frame, which I hope was not the bare effect of his having receiv'd the Sentence of Death in himſelf; not only becauſe during his whole Sickneſs, he diſcovered the like Temper of Mind, whenever he had the free Exerciſe of Reaſon, (which after ſome Days *Delirium*, God was pleaſed very obſervably to reſtore in anſwer to Prayer, ) but becauſe he had formerly been under very deep Impreſſions of what concern'd his Soul, and the Everlaſting World.

God grant that all his Relations and Acquaintance, ſuch eſpecially who have deſir'd this Sermon, may wiſely improve his Deceaſe which adminiſtred the Occaſion. And may it be of ſome uſe to all the Younger ſort who heard it, or may now read it! to help 'em to conſider, and remember the Divine Counſel of this Text, *how Young Men may cleanſe their ways, by taking heed unto the Word of God.*

(

*W*

ch

# *Death our Deliverance.*

## OR, A
## Funeral Sermon
## FOR
## Mrs. *Mary Doolittle*,

(Late Wife of the Reverend
Mr. *Thomas Doolittle*,) who departed this Life *Decemb.* 16. 1692.

2 COR. V. 4.

*We that are in this Tabernacle do groan, being Burdened, not for that we would be uncloathed, but cloathed upon, that Mortality might be ſwallowed up of Life.*

NOtwithſtanding all the difficult Exerciſes of St. *Paul* from Enemies on every ſide, in the Diſcharge of his Miniſtry; He bears up with and invincible Courage, and Reſolution, by the Expectation of an Eternal Recompence in the other World. This is the Tenor of his Diſcourſe throughout the foregoing Chapter, he begins and ends with it; and repeats it at large in the three laſt Verſes, *For this cauſe we faint not*, &c. That is, however perplexed and perſecuted, caſt down and troubled; yet neither he himſelf, nor any of thoſe ingaged in the ſame Cauſe, and Work with him, did *faint in their Minds*; becauſe their preſent Sufferings did only prepare the way for a more glorious Reward; *For our light Affliction*, ſays he, *which is but for a moment, worketh for us a more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory; while we look not at the things which are ſeen, which are but temporal, but at the things which are not ſeen, which are Eternal.* And ſuppoſing the worſt, that theſe Afflictions ſhould end in Death, yet ſuch a Caſe would admit of Comfort. *For we know*, ſays he, *verſ.* 1, 2. *i. e.* we are confidently perſwaded, upon very good grounds, *that if our Earthly Houſe of this Tabernacle were diſſolved*, we have a better Dwelling provided, an happier Condition in hope and view; *We have a Building of God; an Houſe not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.*

*And for this we groan earneſtly*, for this ſtate of Immortal Happineſs, *deſiring to be cloathed upon with our Houſe*, *that is from Heaven.* A Bleſſed State, ſo fitted for Us, and We for it, that no Apparel for the Body can be more.

He was not only content to Dye, and ready with Patience to receive a Summons out of this World; but ſo unſpeakable was the Difference, in his Judgment, between his preſent State in the Body, and that which he expected beyond the Grave, that he reckoned a Tranſlation was every way preferrable, and rather to be choſen, even by intervening Death: That ſo, inſtead of this little Houſe, this mean and poor Dwelling, which we now inhabit, we may come to a better *Building*, that is *of God*, formed and prepared by him: To the more ſpacious Manſions, which the Bleſſed God has provided for us above: That inſtead of this moveable Tent, *This earthly Tabernacle*, continually liable to ſo many Changes, Dangers, and Inconveniencies, we may have a *Houſe not made with hands*, that is, of God's immediate Work, more excellent and more laſting, more ſafe and more abiding: That inſtead of this *earthly Houſe* of dirt and clay, into which it will ſhortly be diſſolved, we may have *a building in Heaven*, ſuited to the Heavenly State and Life; a more commodious Dwelling fitted for the Offices of a Glorified Soul, and which ſhall not molder, but be *Eternal:* That when *this Tabernacle* is diſſolved, which needs every day to be repaired, and with all our care cannot long be ſupported, we may have a permanent unchangeable Building, *Eternal in the Heavens:* In ſhort, that our Bodies, as well as our Souls, may be glorious and bleſſed, and unchangeably ſo, in the other World.

After ſuch a State and Life as this, ſo elegantly deſcribed, in the beginning of this Chapter, he declares his *earneſt Deſire* in this Text; not in his own name only, but as the common ſenſe of all the Followers of Chriſt. This he amplifies, and limits, by ſeveral Expreſſions, unto which ſome following Verſes in this Chapter will give further light; *For we that are in this Tabernacle do groan, being burdened, not for that we would be uncloathed, but cloathed upon, that Mortality might be ſwallowed up of Life.*

In which words we may conſider two Parts. 1. The State and Temper of the Followers of Chriſt, or of all real Chriſtians, That while they are in the Body, they are burdened, and groan for Deliverance. 2. A Judicious Stating the Matter of ſuch Deſire of Deliverance, Or what it is that they groan and long for, ſet forth in three Expreſſions; 1. Negatively, It is *not* Simply *to be uncloathed.* But, 2. *To be cloathed upon.* And 3. *That Mortality may be ſwallowed up of Life.*

I. The State and Temper of good Men, or real Chriſtians, while they are in the Body, *They are burdened*, and therefore *groan for deliverance.* We that are in *this earthly Tabernacle*, Or, as the Expreſſion is, *ver.* 8. *While we are at home in the Body*, preſent in the Body, or *While we converſe or ſojourn in the Body*, which he calls *an earthly Houſe*, ver. 1. But becauſe it is no certain fixed Dwelling, he adds the other term, of a *Tabernacle.* While we dwell in this little Fabrick, framed at firſt out of the Duſt of the Earth, as were the *Worms*, who are therefore our Kindred and Relations, and they were formed *before* the Creation of Man. While we are in *this earthly Tabernacle*, whoſe Foundation is in the Duſt, Whoſe Matter is not more Excellent than that of the Beaſts that periſh. An *earthly* Tabernacle, not only as to its Original, but is ſuſtained and

Pſal.146.4. Eccl.12.7. repaired by earthly things, and e're long to be reſolved into *Earth* again; *This duſt ſhall be turned to earth, as it was, and the Spirit ſhall return to God.* While we are in this earthly *Houſe* we groan, ϛενάζομεν, and long for removal; we earneſtly covet, deſire and wait for, a better Dwelling, and a better State; we pant, and breath, and long for it, from the Faith and Hope of what God has revealed, concerning the upper, better World, and the future Felicity of all that believe in Chriſt, where we look for another ſort of *Bodies*, and another kind of *Life:* This is that we aſpire and groan after, and would fain obtain.

II. He deſcribes the Matter of ſuch *a Deſire*, and the juſt Limits of it, in three Expreſſions. 1. *Negatively*, *Not for that we would be uncloathed*; i.e. 1. *Not Simply to dye*, for dying ſake; Not meerly to be rid of the Body, and to live without any: As we are a ſort of Creatures made up of Soul and Body, the Separation of theſe Two cannot in it ſelf, for its own ſake, be deſirable; we have a natural, innocent, unavoidable Averſion to *Death*, as ſuch. And as it is a Penalty, and the Fruit of Sin, (as even to the beſt Men it is,) there cannot but be ſome Unwillingneſs to dye, however fit it be to be deſired otherwiſe, on the account of the Conſequences of Death. All the Faith and Reaſon in the World cannot make Death to be no *Penalty*: So neither is it poſſible that any Man can reaſon or believe himſelf, into a love of Pain and Death as ſuch. Therefore it is not ſimply *to be uncloathed*, to have Soul and Body ſeparated, that is here deſired. It is not a perpetual ſtate of being *without a Body*; For he deſires to be *cloathed upon*, and *not found naked*. Our Caſe is ſo ſtated, that our Souls are to be cloathed upon with a Body, and we cannot but deſire, that the Union of the Soul and Body ſhould be preſerved: And in the ſtate of Separation there is ſome hankering of the Soul after the Body; Some ſuch Deſire of regaining that Reunion.

2. Neither is it meerly *a Wearineſs of this preſent Life*, by reaſon of the Burden of Sorrows and Sufferings, which the Apoſtle and other Chriſtians met with in it, that makes them thus to *groan*: For if He might be further ſerviceable to the Intereſt of Chriſt, and therein be accepted and pleaſing to Him, he declares, *v. 9.* that he was willing to live. He profeſſes his readineſs to prefer *the Salvation* of *many Souls*, and his being inſtrumental to their *Happineſs*; be-

fore the haſtening of *his own.* He knew that God may have as much Service in our Lives, in an afflicted ſuffering State, as in a proſperous Condition: He knew that we may glorifie God in Sickneſs, and in a Priſon, as much, or more than with Health or Liberty: And that to bear any of our Trials and Burdens well, and to honour God by a Chriſtian Deportment under them, is better than to be delivered.

His *Deſire* therefore of *the bleſſed State*, which was in Expectation, was not to the Act of Diſſolution it ſelf, without reference to what would follow. He deſires not ſo much the End of *this Life*, whatever he now ſuffered, as the bleſſedneſs of *the next Life*, which he hoped for. It was not *an Annihilation*, to put a period to his preſent Sufferings, but a happy *Change*, which he groaned for; Not a Ruin, but a temporary diſſolution of this earthly Houſe, in order to an Eternal Advantage; Not a bare privation of *this* Life, but a paſſage to a *better*. He doth not groan ſo much, from the Senſe of *preſent Evil*, as by reaſon of the *Abſence* of his *moſt deſired Good.* He was not ſo much burdened by what he felt, and could not avoid, or remove, as by what he foreſaw and expected, and could not yet Enjoy: He muſt *dye firſt*, and have the old Houſe pull'd down, before he could reach that compleat Felicity, which he ſo earneſtly aſpires after. Therefore

2. It is further expreſt, as that which he groaned and longed for, *viz. to be Cloathed upon*; To lay aſide this mean, little, and troubleſome Garment, for a more beautiful and commodious one; To have this Earthly Houſe diſſolved, and molder into Duſt, with the Expectation of reaſſuming *Another*, or *the Same with a glorious Change.* And in that ſenſe the Expreſſion, *verſe* 3. may be underſtood, That *being thus cloathed*, that is, with ſuch a glorified Body, *we may not be found Naked*, or without any Body at all. Though * ſome carry the Expreſſion, *Deſiring to be cloathed upon*, as wiſhing not to put off this Body at all, but to be in the number of thoſe, who ſhall be *found alive at the coming of Chriſt to Judgment*, which ſome of the Diſciples of Chriſt expected, by a miſtake of what he ſaid concerning St. *John*, *If I will that he tarry till I come.* And ſo the words may be read, *If ſo be that we ſhall be found cloathed, and not naked*; That is, if at Chriſt's coming we ſhall be found *Alive*, and not *Dead*; and

*A.B.*Cant*. 3d Vol. Serm.6. 8°.

and ſo have this mortal corruptible Body, changed into a Spiritual, Glorious, and Immortal one, without dying.

Whether that was the ſenſe of the Apoſtle, or not, I ſhall diſcourſe of theſe words, as the common Sentiment of real Chriſtians, who have no hope of Living till the end of the World, but expect to dye e're it be long, and earneſtly deſire a future Bleſſedneſs for Soul and Body in another Life; and therefore when they lay down this Body in the Duſt, they *groan to be cloathed upon*, to have theſe vile Bodies, made like the glorious Body of Chriſt; or, as the Apoſtle himſelf expreſſes it, To have *this* 1 Cor. 15. 53. *Corruptible put on Incorruption, and this Mortal put on Immortality.* The *putting off* there, is the ſame with the *being cloathed upon* here. That is, they groan to have this preſent State changed, for the Felicity and Glory of that Future Life, which Chriſt hath given them to expect, both for Soul and Body in another World.

III. There is yet another Expreſſion, which riſeth higher, *That Mortality may be ſwallowed up of Life.* That which is Mortal. Τὸ θνητὸν, *This our mortal Life*, which is ſubject to Dangers, Afflictions, and Death it ſelf, That this may be *Swal-*

*lowed up of Life*, as is that which is Imperfect, by that which is Perfect; as Infancy and Childhood by Maturity and Manhood, or as Darkneſs is ſwallowed up in Light. The meaning is, that our low Animal Life may be changed into an Heavenly one; that our frail, ſhort, and tranſitory Life may be changed into an Immortal, Eternal one; that the Corruption and Mortality, which our Bodies are liable to, and which remain in them while they are in the Grave, may be removed; Or, according to the Apoſtles Phraſe, *That Death may be ſwallowed up in Victory*, may be finally, perfectly, and *for ever Deſtroyed:* For ſo the expreſſion does import, and is often rendered in other places, * *for ever:* And that includes the Reſurrection of the *Body* to an happy State, as one part of this Deſire. For if by Dying we are more miſerable than before, *Death* is not ſwallowed up in *Victory*, it rather is too hard for *us*, and gains a *Victory over us.* But if our ſtate be bettered by *Death*, not only as to our Souls, but our very *Bodies* are alſo to be raiſed again to a glorious Life; if when *Death* hath done its utmoſt, our Souls paſs into a State of Reſt and Bliſs, to be compleated in *a glorious Reſurrection of the Body*, and to be continued

* See Dr. *Hammond*, 1 Cor. 15. 54. g.

tinued and increaſed to all Eternity; we are then *Victorious* over *Death*, *Death* may be ſaid to be *ſwallowed up in Victory*, *or Mortality ſwallowed up of Everlaſting Life*.

After this Paraphraſe and Explication of the words, that which I deſign as the Ground of my following Diſcourſe, is this, *That it becomes the State, and Frame of real Chriſtians, while they are burdened in theſe mortal Bodies, earneſtly to deſire a better, an Immortal Life, wherein the Body, as well as the Soul, ſhall be glorioulſy Changed.*

In diſcourſing of this, I ſhall *firſt* ſhow, That ſuch is the preſent State of good Men in theſe Bodies, that they groan under manifold Burdens, that may well make them long for Deliverance.

II. That they have the certain Expectation of a better State and Life, after the Diſſolution of this Earthly Tabernacle by Death.

III. That it is agreeable to the Temper of a Chriſtian Spirit, ſo far as renewed and ſanctified, to long for that better State and Life, beyond the Grave.

IV. That it is not ſuch a State and Life, wherein they expect to be without any Body at all; but to have *their Bodies* raiſed, and changed, and glorified; To be cloathed upon with an Houſe from Heaven, and to have Mortality ſwallowed up in Life. The conſideration of theſe Particulars will make way for the *practical Application*, ſuitable to this Solemn Occaſion, on which I am deſired to Preach on this Text.

Firſt, That ſuch is the preſent State of good Men in theſe Bodies, that they groan under manifold *Burdens*, which may well make them long for Deliverance. I need not run far into the common Theme of the Miſeries of Humane Life, which every one feels, or knows of thoſe that do: Our Sufferings and our Sins, while in this earthly Tabernacle, will be ſufficient to be conſidered under this Head.

1. Our *Sorrows*, and *Sufferings*, while in the Body. Our early Tears when we come into the World prognoſticate a good ſhare of theſe to be expected. Not to mention the Vexation of diſappointment in our Temporal Enjoyments, as a great part of this Burden; the actual Sorrows and Afflictions which all

partake of, are very many, and great, and heavy. They are ſuch as extort the Cries, and Tears, and Complaints, of all ſorts of Perſons. The little Pleaſure and Joy we meet with, is mixed with an alloy of Sorrow; but our Sorrows are more numerous, weighty and unmixed. Many ſad Occurrences, vexing Paſſions, painful and afflictive Diſeaſes, every Week diſquiet us. Cares conſume us, Fears devour us, Grief ſeizeth us every way, and ſometimes from ſuch Evils, as nothing but the Hope of Heaven can ſupport us under: No other Balm can cure ſome of our Wounds. So that *Evil*, as
Gen. 47.7. well as *few, are the days of the years of*
Gal. 1.4. *our Pilgrimage.* And the *preſent World*, on this account, may well be called *an evil World.*

The very Neceſſities, Infirmities and Pains of *the Body*, are a continual Burden, even ſuch as belong to our *Humanity*, and are common to Men: Beſides the many more and greater, we are ſometimes expoſed to, as Chriſtians, for the ſake of Chriſt, and the Profeſſion of the Truth. But we need not other Creatures to fail us, and Friends to grieve us, or Enemies to hate us, or Satan to moleſt us, or the World to deceive us; this very *Body*, this Earthly Houſe, is ſubjeſt to ſo many Calamities, as may make us weary of it, and groan to be delivered. How much of our time muſt it take up! How much pains and labour muſt we be at about it! How much grief and ſorrow muſt it undergo! How many ways do Pain and Sickneſs enter! By every Member, and every part of the Body, and this is communicated to the Whole, and we cannot but feel it. If the Body be pincht with hunger and thirſt, the Soul is reſtleſs till it procure a Supply. If the one be ſick, the other is ſad. The Soul is affected with the wants of the Body, and for the moſt part Inordinately, and ſinfully Thoughtful; and calls out the Soul to attend upon the ſeveral Paſſions of the Body, filling it with Deſires, Pleaſures, Griefs, Fears, Angers, *&c.* Which hinder our Knowledge of God, Service of him, and Communion with him. Is it then any wonder, if they groan to put off the Shoe that pinches them, that they may be weary, and pained, and cold, and thirſty, afflicted and grieved no more?

Can we find this preſent Dwelling ſo very inconvenient, and not deſire to have ſomething better? Do we not find the Body a clog to the Soul, when it would run; a Manacle to the Soul, that would work; a Snare to the Soul that would be free; a Fetter to Chain it to Earthly and Material things, *&c.* Do we not own theſe and the like Burdens to be innumerable, heavy, and inevitable, and is it ſtrange we ſhould long for Eaſe? How ſmall a Portion of Time is it, wherein *our own* Sickneſs, or that of *our Relations* and *Friends*, doth not diſquiet us! *Their* Afflictions, Sorrows and Sufferings, or *our own*, are continual Burdens; and the more we love them the more we are intereſted in what concerns them, and the greater part we bear in their Sufferings, as being the more affected with their Miſeries. And yet God knows all this is needful to keep down the Love of this World, take off our undue Affections to Earthly things, and raiſe our Thoughts to ſomething better, than is here to be had.

O! How many do we know, and have known, who groan under theſe Burdens, from the Diſorders and Pains of the Body, as the Harbingers of Death! Eſpecially under the weakneſs, languiſhing, and decays of *Old Age:* For even a Diſeaſed and Conſumed Body in that caſe, tho' it be leſs Tempting, is not the leſs Troubleſome, but the more ſo, even to make them weary of Life.

Our Days are Grief and Sorrow, Trouble and Affliction; that we may be made to know we are not *at home*, but Strangers here. While *Iſrael* dwelt in a fruitful *Goſhen*, they might be Tempted to forget the Promiſed Land, but their Difficulties, Dangers and Conflicts in the Wilderneſs would not ſuffer 'em to miſtake a Deſart for a *Canaan*.

'What is the daily Condition of our 'Fleſh, as * one well expreſſes it, but 'Weakneſs and Suffering, with Care and 'Labour to prevent much worſe, which 'yet we know cannot be avoided; The 'Sorrow of many a Mans Life has made 'him wiſh he had never been born, and 'why ſhould he not be as willing to dye, 'which doth ten thouſand times more 'for him, if he be a real Chriſtian, than 'to be unborn would have done. Not a 'Relation ſo comfortable, but hath its 'diſcomforts. Not a Friend ſo ſuitable, 'but hath ſome diſcordancy; nor any ſo 'amiable and ſweet, but hath ſomething 'troubleſome and bitter; not a Place ſo 'pleaſant and commodious, but hath its 'unfitneſs and diſcommodities; Not a 'Society ſo good and regular, but hath 'its Corruptions and Irregularities. And 'ſhould we be loath to leave ſuch a 'Life as this? When the Fruit is Ripe, 'ſhould

* Mr. *Baxter* of Self-denial, *chap.* 38.

'ſhould it not be gathered? When the 'Corn is Ripe, would you have it grow 'there, and not be Cut? When we are 'begotten again to the Hopes of Immortality, ſhould we be ſo deſirous to ſtay 'in the Womb? Is it not another kind 'of Life which we ſhall have with God? 'Are they not purer Comforts that ſtay 'for us above? But if you will not have 'the Grapes to be Gathered and Preſt, 'how can you expect to have the Wine? 'Methinks our Fleſh ſhould have enough 'e're this time, of Sickneſs, and Pain, and 'Want, and Croſſes, and ſhould be contented to lye down in hope of the Day 'when theſe ſhall be no more.

II. Upon the account of *Sin* they are yet more *burdened*. The frequent commiſſion of Sin, the fears of unpardoned Sin, the remainders of Indwelling Sin, *&c.* are a conſtant burden to a Chriſtian while in the Body. They are ſenſible how ſhort and ſmall, how weak and low, their Knowledge of God, and Love to him are? how imperfectly and defectively they Serve him here, in compariſon of what their Brethren above do. And they are ſenſible, that much of this ariſes from the *Body*, that it is no wonder if they are willing to be *Uncloathed*. They find it not only a troubleſome, but a dangerous Companion, as that which hinders them from many hours Communion with God ; that clogs, and diverts, and interrupts their Service of God, and Enjoyment of him : So that even the beſt and holieſt Men have owned they had much ado to refrain from wiſhing they had never been born, even when at the ſame time they knew, that thought to be ſinful. The intereſt of this Body ſtands in ſuch Competition with God and our Souls, ſince the entrance of ſin ; we are expoſed, and tempted, and drawn to Sin, ſo many ways, by means of the Body, by our Senſes, Appetites, and Imagination, as may juſtly make us groan for Deliverance.

All the Objects of Senſe about us in every Condition, our Food, and Cloathing, our Houſes and Eſtates, Friends and Relations, and our Selves, moſt of all, yield us Temptations. And the more Holy and Sanctified any are, the more apprehenſive they muſt needs be of this Burthen. Their Spirits are more tender, Earthly things are more unſuitable, God's Diſpleaſure is more fear'd, ſo that they would rather chuſe to be freed from ſin, than to be Poſſeſſors of the whole World. The clearer Light they have of *the Evil* *of Sin*, and the more unfeigned their Love to God and Chriſt is, (who is diſhonoured and diſpleaſed by it) and the more ardent their Deſires are, to be like him, and pleaſe him, and the more lively their Hopes are of living with him for ever, this makes this Burthen of Sin to be ſo much the more intolerable.

And even Temptations to Sin, tho' they prevail not, are a part of their Burden. It is grievous to a good Man to be continually ſollicited and tempted by the World, Fleſh, and Devil, to diſhonour and diſobey the Lord. And where are we without ſuch Temptations? We can hardly open our Eyes and Ears, but we meet with one.

So that this is one great Conſideratio that moves them to deſire, and chuſe to be diſſolved, that they may ſin *no more*, and be tempted *no more*, that they ma grieve the Spirit of Grace *no more*, an interrupt their own Peace, and Joy, an Communion with God and Chriſt, *n* *more for ever*.

Yea, notwithſtanding the Mortificatio of the Fleſh, and the Life of Faith ſincerely begun, and carried on; yet the ſinful Diſtempers of our Spirits, our frequent Decays and Back-ſlidings, our low Attainments in Grace and Comfort, an

owin

owing very much to *this Body*, as the Spring, or at leaſt the Occaſion of them. Our Sloth and Negligence, our eager Paſſions, inordinate Cares, and Fears, and Griefs, yea, our general Diſinclination and Averſion to Spiritual and Heavenly Things, are much from this Fleſh, this Earthly Houſe of our Tabernacle.

Let me ſum up this Head in better Words than my own: '* Who can reflect
' upon this preſent State, and not
' be in Pangs and Groans after a better?
' Eſpecially on the account of the Spiritual
' Grievances of Chriſtians, the Darkneſs
' of our beclouded Minds, the
' glimmering and ineffectual Apprehenſions
' we have of the moſt Important
' Things, the Inconſiſtency of our ſcattered
' Thoughts when we would apply
' them to Spiritual Objects, the
' great difficulty of working off *an ill*
' *frame of Heart*, and the no leſs difficulty
' of retaining a *good one*; our being
' ſo often toſt as between Heaven and
' Hell, that when we have been raiſed,
' and hope to deſcend no more, we are
' all on a ſudden plunged in the Ditch,
' ſo that our own Cloaths abhor us. How
' often do repell'd Temptations return again!
' and vanquiſhed Corruptions recover
' ſtrength, that we know not when

* *Mr.* Howe *of Bleſſedneſs*, p. 493.

‘ our Work is done! We are miſerable
‘ that we need be always watching, and
‘ more miſerable that we cannot watch,
‘ but are ſo often ſurpriſed and overcome
‘ of evil. We ſay ſometimes we will
‘ ſeek Relief in Retirement, but we
‘ cannot Retire from our ſelves; Or in
‘ converſe with Godly Friends, but they
‘ often prove Snares to us, and we to
‘ them; or we hear but our own Sins
‘ and Miſeries repeated in their Com-
‘ plaints. Would we Pray, how faint
‘ is the Breath we utter! How long is
‘ it er'e we can get our Hearts poſſeſt,
‘ with any becoming Apprehenſions of
‘ God, or lively ſenſe of our own Con-
‘ cernments! So for *Meditation*, when we
‘ would compoſe our Thoughts, we may
‘ as well attempt to hold the Wind in our
‘ fiſt, &c. And would we then out of
Choice continue in ſuch a State as this,
under ſo many Burdens, and of ſuch a
Nature? How is it that we do not cry
out more feelingly, *O wretched Man that
I am! Who ſhall deliver me from this Body
of Death?* Nothing but the Belief and
Expectation of Another, and Better State
can ſupport us under theſe Burdens; and
that is next to be conſidered.

*Secondly*, That real Chriſtians have the certain Expectation of a better State and Life, after the Diſſolution of this Earthly Tabernacle. 1. As to the Thing it ſelf, ſuch a better State is Certain. 2. As to Particular Chriſtians, they may have a certain Expectation of it, as to themſelves. Let us Conſider,

1. The *Objective Certainty*, That there is ſuch a better State, and Life beyond the Grave. Were there no ſuch Expectation, of all Creatures in the World, Men were the moſt Miſerable, and ſerious Chriſtians, and the Wiſeſt and moſt Knowing Men, would be *moſt* ſo. The preſent Vanity of Life were enough to make us regret it, if nothing more or better were to be expected: we could not but always live in dread and fear of Death; we ſhould not enjoy our ſelves here, and yet would be afraid of loſing our ſelves for ever hereafter.

* ‘We were miſerable indeed in this
‘Life, if there were no ſuch Future
‘State of Immortality to be expected.
‘From the higheſt pitch of Humane Fe-
‘licity, there could be nothing but a
‘ſad proſpect of the gloomy Regions of
‘Everlaſting Death and Darkneſs. What
‘can ſupport the Mind under ſuch a

* *Dr.* Parker'*s*, *Demonſtration of the Law of Nature*, Sect. 21.

‘view? Or ſcatter our Black and Melancholy Apprehenſions about it? When ‘we think that after a ſhort Muſhrome ‘Life, we muſt return to Duſt and Silence, and be for ever buried in the horror and loathſomneſs of the Grave. This ‘will daſh and diſturb all our Joys, and ‘ſpoil the Chearfulneſs and Tranquillity ‘of our Spirits in a proſperous State. ‘This will double all the Miſeries of ‘Life, for under them to think to fetch ‘Relief from dying, is ſuch another kind ‘of Comfort, as if you ſhould tell a ‘Man in a Storm at Sea, that there is ‘no hope of allaying the Tempeſt, but ‘when you are Drown'd, the Storm will ‘trouble you no longer. This will be an ‘intolerable Acceſſion to the load of preſent Calamity, to conſider the Period ‘of Life is ſo ſhort and fading, and that ‘ſo much of ſo little ſhould be loſt and ‘worn away in Sorrow and Miſery, and ‘to deſpair of any Remedy or Deliverance, but in Eternal Death. 'Tis much ‘more Eligible never to have been born, ‘than only to Grieve, and ſuffer a while, ‘and Dye; to drop a Tear, and vent a ‘Groan, and paſs a little time in a Stormy, Tempeſtuous World, and then diſappear, and ſink back into Nothing.

But all who own any thing of Religion, acknowledge ſomewhat of an Immortal State. The poor Heathens themſelves had ſome Notices of it; the Jews in their ſeveral Generations believed it: and the very Light of Nature will do much to manifeſt that ſuch a Difference there will be hereafter between a Man and a Beaſt, between the Good and Bad, between the final State of thoſe that love, and pleaſe, and ſerve God, and of thoſe that diſobey his known Will. For who can acknowledge and own a God, as Maker and Governour of the World, the Wiſe and Righteous Judge of all, and think he will turn Men promiſcuouſly into Heaven, or Hell at random: without diſtinguiſhing between Friends and Enemies, Righteous and Wicked; or that he'l neither Reward or Puniſh; that there ſhall be no ſtate of Happineſs for the one ſort, or of Miſery for the other. Beſides the Teſtimony of Conſcience, as to the Hopes and Fears of theſe things in another World, is of weight in this Caſe.

But I hope I need not here be large, when I ſpeak to ſuch as profeſs to believe the Bible: and *there* it is as certain as that God is true, who hath declared it; or that Chriſt was ſent of God, who has taught it; as true, as that he died, and roſe again, and aſcended to Heaven; and that all his Apoſtles and Followers have lived and died in the Expectation of ſuch a State. The Reſurrection of the Body, I grant, was not ſo plain an Article before the coming of Chriſt; but a general State of Happineſs for Holy Perſons in another World no Chriſtians will deny: And our Lord has proved the Perſonal Capacity of future Rewards, by the Doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul, and the Reſurrection of the Body, and by an account of the manner of the Adminiſtration of theſe Rewards, as more inchoate and particular at Death, more univerſal and conſummate at Judgment, in the great Day of Retribution. All the Doctrines of the Goſpel concerning Chriſt, do ſuppoſe, or aſcertain this. He came into the World to purchaſe our Right and Title to ſuch a Bleſſed State, and went to Heaven again, to plead, and proſecute, and apply, and beſtow it. So that ſuch a thing is *Certain*, and may be expected, by all the Followers of Chriſt. It is as certain and unqueſtionable as the Word and Oath of God can make it: much more certain than if a Meſſenger from the Dead did come and tell you ſo: For the manifold Witneſſes of the Holy Ghoſt to the Divine Commiſſion of Chriſt, and the Truth of the Goſpel, is a much greater Thing, and more credible, than any ſuch tranſient Teſtimony could be. But I ſhall not inſiſt on this, the Devils themſelves believe it, and prove it; for if there be no *Heaven*, there is no *Hell*.

2. Particular Chriſtians may have a certain Expectation of this happy State beyond the Grave. *We know*, ſays the Apoſtle, *that we have a Building in Heaven*, when this Earthly Tabernacle ſhall be diſſolved. *We know*, and *are aſſured of it*; It is a thing ſo evident and manifeſt, it is capable of being demonſtrated. It is not my bare Opinion, but the common ſenſe of all the Followers of Chriſt, built on ſuch grounds, that we are ready to venture our Lives, and all that is dear to us, upon this believing Expectation. And becauſe we know we have another, better Building reſerved in Heaven for us, we therefore groan and long to be there; we *have* a Building in Heaven, tho' we are yet on Earth: As he that hath an Eſtate in another Kingdom or Country, as well as this, may call both *his own*, tho' he cannot dwell in both at once; nay, tho' it may be he

muſt travel a great way, and croſs the Seas, before he can reach to one of them.

Particular Chriſtians may be *Certain*. The Apoſtle often declares it as to himſelf, and all the Children of God have a Title to the Inheritance, they have Deeds and Evidences to ſhow for it, they have the Will and Teſtament of their Lord and Maſter to produce, and they have *the Seal of his Spirit*, as a Witneſs in their Hearts, which is *the Earneſt of the Inheritance, whereby they are ſealed to the Day of Redemption.*

1 Pet.1.13 Sanctifying Grace is called an *Immortal, Incorruptible Seed*, and they that
1 Jon.3.13 are Partakers of it *have Eternal Life abiding in them*, becauſe this preſent Life begun ſhall be perfected in Glory. This Seal of the Holy Spirit on the Soul, is the *Earneſt* of the Heavenly Inheritance, to manifeſt how ſure and certain it is, as well as a *foretaſt* to prove how good. *We have an Houſe in Heaven*, a Building not made with Hands. We have it as *our own*, we are ſo Certain of it, as we reckon our ſelves in ſome ſenſe already in Poſſeſſion. We abide, it is true, for a while in this Earthly Dwelling; but we have another and a better Houſe, a Building of God, not made

made with Hands, and we long to be there.

They that can make out the unfeignedneſs of their Faith in Chriſt, and the Sincerity of their Love to him; who can diſcern the Truth of their Sanctification, who can perceive the Image of God upon their Souls; his Impreſs, Character and Seal; having turned their Hearts from the World and Sin, to God, and Holineſs, and Heaven, with an anſwerable Converſation in Simplicity and Godly Sincerity; They may have a *Subjective Certainty* of this, by the Teſtimony of Conſcience, and by the concurrent Witneſs of the Spirit, enabling them to diſcern the Truth of their Grace: they may know their own Intereſt in the Promiſe, and argue it to their Comfort, from the Qualifications of ſuch to whom the Promiſe is made. I do not ſay that All do reach to an actual Certainty, and full Perſwaſion; the generality we find do not; but ſuch a thing is *Attainable*, and all ſhould labour after it: And did we ſeek it in the right way, endeavouring, by the Exerciſe and Increaſe of Grace, to know the Truth of it, more would reach this, than commonly do. And then more would long, and groan, and deſire to be uncloathed of this

Earthly Tabernacle, that they may be cloathed upon with an Houſe from Heaven, and Mortality be ſwallowed up of Life. Which brings me to conſider the *Third* thing I propoſed to ſpeak to.

III. That 'tis ſuitable to the Temper of a Chriſtian Spirit, ſo far as renewed and ſanctified, to deſire and long for that better State and Life beyond the Grave. I know there may be an impatient Senſe of preſent Troubles, or an inordinate Fear of threatning Dangers and Calamities, that may make ſome ſinfully deſire to be uncloathed, make them long for Death, and be glad to find the Grave.
Jonah 4.3. *O Lord, I beſeech thee*, ſays Jonah, *take away my Life from me, for it is better for*
Job 7. 15. *me to die than to live. And my Soul chuſeth ſtrangling rather than Life*, ſays *Job.* But that is not the Caſe here, the Apoſtle goes upon another Principle; he groaned, while in this Tabernacle, for the glorious State which he believingly foreſaw. And every renewed Soul has a diſpoſition ſo to do, in his new Nature, he is *born from above*, (ἄνωϑεν) and his very Principles have a tendency to *Heaven*, he is attempered and ſuited to the heavenly State: By that very Grace whereby we are made Chriſtians, we are inſtructed to

to look for, and wait for, the glorious Appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, at which Appearance we hope to be cloathed upon with an Houſe from Heaven: *For when he who is our Life ſhall appear*, he has promiſed that *we alſo ſhall appear in Glory.* They cannot but deſire and long for this, if they had no Burden of Afflictions and Sorrows in the World, that made them groan for deliverance. For I am perſwaded, that all the Conflicts and Exerciſes of St. *Paul*, either by bodily Pains, or with enraged malicious Enemies, never wrung ſuch a Sigh from him, as the Conflict with his own Corruptions, *O wretched Man that I am!* All the Preſſures that he ever met with in his earthly Tabernacle, never made him groan ſo much, as the Burden of his own impure Fleſh, and his lamented Diſtance from the Lord. Therefore conſider,

I. The Diſpoſition of a ſanctified Soul, as renewed by the Holy Spirit, does incline and fit for this. II. The want of full Conformity to Chriſt. III. The Senſe of our Diſtance from Him, while we are here. IV. The unequal Communications of Light, and Grace, and Comfort from God and Chriſt, which a real

Chriſtian doth now Experience, will aſſiſt theſe Deſires, and make him groan for Deliverance.

*Firſt*, There is ſuch *a Diſpoſition* in the Soul, ſanctified by Divine Grace, from whence ſuch Deſires muſt needs reſult. They have received the *firſt Fruits of the Spirit* as the *Earneſt* of more, and therefore *groan within themſelves, waiting for the Adoption, even the Redemption of the Body*, Rom. 8. 23. They are now taken into God's Family, as his Children, are born from above: But the moſt ſolemn Act of their *Adoption*, is at the laſt Day, when there ſhall be a full and final Deliverance from all penal and afflictive Evil. Called *the Redemption of the Body*: As Death is the laſt Enemy to be deſtroyed; and the Body till the Reſurrection, is under the power of Death: Called *a Redemption*, becauſe it is done by vertue of the Price, and Ranſom which Chriſt hath paid for us. Having received the firſt Fruits of the Spirit, they groan for the Adoption, this Redemption of the Body. And *by this Spirit*, they are ſaid to be *ſealed unto the Day of Redemption*, Eph. 4. 30. The Holy Spirit aſſures us of ſuch a Day. We are now the Temples of the Holy Ghoſt, and he will not leave his own

Dwelling continually in the Duſt. And by this holy Spirit all our Deſires and Hopes of a bleſſed Reſurrection are wrought in us. And the mighty Change which is made by the Spirit,on the Souls of Believers, will evidence the poſſibility of that Change, which is expected as to their Bodies: For to raiſe a dead Soul to Spiritual Life, is at leaſt an equal Inſtance, of glorious Power, as to raiſe the Body from the Grave.

This they may well groan for, as the moſt Solemn Act of *their Adoption*, in conformity to Chriſt their Head, who, (as ſome obſerve,) tho' he were the Son of God by his marvellous Conception, and owned to be ſo during his Life, yet had the higheſt Declaration of it at his Reſurrection; *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.* In like manner, tho' the Followers of Chriſt are now owned and treated as Children; yet the moſt publick Declaration of the Divine Favour towards them, will be at the laſt Day, when their Bodies ſhall be raiſed,and all the Children of the Reſurrection ſhall be born in a Day. They are now made *meet* by the Spirit, to be partakers of the heavenly Inheritance, 1 *Coloſſ.* 12. they are now changed into the Divine Image, prepared and fitted for the heavenly State; their Spiritual Life is ſupported by the Delights and Comforts of the other World, as the Animal Life is by thoſe of the preſent World. They know ſomewhat of the Excellency of it, they find ſomething in themſelves, that makes them value and deſire it; and by the little Experience they have had, of the Pleaſure and Joy of Obeying God, and Converſing with him, they conclude how unſpeakably better it will be hereafter, when their Union and Communion ſhall be Compleat.

The Holy Nature they partake of by *Regeneration*, as mindful of its Divine Original, doth mount the Soul to Heaven, tends to the place from whence it came, works towards its Center, and makes them reſtleſs in their Deſires after it; and by frequent, lively, believing Thoughts of the heavenly Inheritance, they gradually enter into it; and ripen for *Glory*, the nearer they come to the full Poſſeſſion. We read of being *changed from Glory to Glory*, 2 Cor. 3. 18. by partaking of the Divine Image. So that as *Grace* increaſeth, *Glory* haſteneth on, and every degree of Grace is a ſtep nearer to Glory. For the more conformable we are to the Divine Image, the more meet are we to dwell with God. And he that hath fitted the new Nature to the heavenly Life, will not fail to bring his Children to it, when he has *wrought them for this ſelf ſame thing, and given them the Earneſt of his Spirit*, 2 Cor. 5. *6.*

The New Nature, ſaith one, does as naturally aſcend to Heaven, when uncloathed of Fleſh, and hath left all the Relicks of Corruption behind it, as the pure Flame aſpires into the Air, and ſeems to long to inbody it ſelf with the Sun the Fountain of Light. By this they have a Fitneſs for Heaven and a *Diſpoſition* for that bleſſed Life, which, as it daily increaſeth, muſt make their deſires ſtronger to enter upon it. For there is a Beauty in the Divine Image, and a Sweetneſs in our imperfect Graces, in the preſent Actings of 'em, that muſt make us value and deſire Perfection. There is an Heavenly Sweetneſs in every Act of Love to God and Chriſt, that may make the Soul cry out, ‘Oh! how happy ſhould I be, could ‘I but love as much, and as long as I ‘would; could I be all Love, and al‘way Loving, might my God and Savi‘our be my conſtant Deſire, Delight, and ‘Joy! I would not envy the Honours or ‘Pleaſures of any in this World; what ‘then is that bleſſed State which I now

‘ hope for, with perfected Graces in the ‘ Preſence of Chriſt!

If our *Faith* be true, ſo as to unite us to Chriſt, and make us ſoundly believe the Goſpel Revelation, and conſent to be His, our Affections muſt needs be kindled to a Willingneſs, and Deſire to be with him. And if our *Hope* be of the right kind, it muſt be an Expectation with Deſire and Pleaſure, of the great and glorious things that we pretend to hope for. We are framed, and *wrought by the Spirit of God, for this very ſame thing*, and by continual Influence from the ſame Spirit, will the Eternal Bleſſedneſs of the Future State be carried on. But we cannot be meet for it, without deſiring it, we cannot prepare for it without longing after it. Preparing Grace is to make us willing of Glory, as well as meet for it, and to keep us in the way to it. And all our Diligence and Activity, all our Watchfulneſs and Care, all our Patience and Self-denial, all our Stedfaſtneſs and Perſeverance, in the Chriſtian Courſe, as the Fruits of Faith and Love, muſt be influenced, cheriſhed, and maintained, by ſuch Deſires. This is the deſign and tendency of all the Operations of the Holy Spirit on the Soul, for which he is promis'd and given to Believers. This is one great End of all the Ordinances and Inſtitutions of the Goſpel, under the Agency of the Holy Spirit, to qualifie and diſpoſe us for the Heavenly State, and to excite and keep alive *Deſires* after it, and help us to purſue the proper Ends and Uſes of the Divine Life.

*Secondly*, Our want of full Conformity and Likeneſs unto Chriſt, makes theſe Deſires Suitable to the Temper of real Chriſtians. Tho' the Guilt of Sin be removed by pardoning Grace, yet they are not perfectly cleanſed from all Impurity; there are ſad Remainders of Senſual and Earthly Affections. Tho' the reigning Power of Sin be broken, by the Spirit of Holineſs, yet we are not wholly rid of it; we ſenſibly feel Darkneſs in our Minds, Diſorders in our Affections, Diſtempers in our Spirits. The moſt Righteous Souls are now vexed with their own Corruptions from within, and the Guilt of many Actual Sins, as well as by the Abominations of others. While we are in the Body, we are in a State of Warfare and Conflict. We feelingly complain of the inward Conteſt and Diviſion between the Law of the Fleſh, and the Law of the Mind: As

*Rebecca* felt the Twins, *Jacob* and *Eſau*, ſtirring in her Womb. Our Time of Triumph is not in this World: The troubled Sea of Corrupt Nature will often ſend forth Mire and Dirt. But the Blood of Chriſt ſhall perfectly cleanſe us from Sin, ſo as to remove all our Filth, and fully deliver us from Corruption, as well as from Condemnation.

The holieſt Saints do now walk humbly with God under the Senſe of Remaining Corruption, they watch, and pray, and ſtrive againſt it: Endeavouring greater Mortification, preſſing after more Holineſs; and therefore long for *Heaven*, when the Deliverance will be perfect. They are now ſenſible of the Workings and contrary Tendency of the two oppoſite Principles, *Fleſh* and *Spirit*; they find that the more Spiritual any Duty is, the more backward their Hearts are to it; they perceive every little Indulgence of the Fleſh raiſeth an Interpoſition between God and the Soul, and hinders the Liberty, Boldneſs, Confidence, Activity and Peace, which otherwiſe they might have. They deſire and endeavour nearer Conformity to the Divine Pattern, as well as clearer Evidence of Forgiveneſs. They would fain be more like God, as well as eſcape his Wrath, and be delivered from Sin, as well as from Hell.

They are ſenſible how Indwelling Sin indiſpoſes them for holy Duties, deadens and diſtracts their Hearts in Spiritual Worſhip, makes them loſe the benefit of Ordinances, renders Sabbaths and Sacraments Lifeleſs, and Unprofitable. They feel it to be the Fewel of many a Temptation, and a conſtant Root of Bitterneſs, that oppoſes the Spirit of Grace, and keeps them Low, and makes them barren and unfruitful; that prevails frequently, by ſudden and violent Motions to the Diſhonour of God, and the Grieving of the Holy Spirit, and the Reproach of their Profeſſion; and ſo ſhakes their Peace, and damps their Aſſurance, and obſtructs their comfortable Hopes of God's Acceptance. They find the Oppoſition of this boſom Enemy moſt ſenſible, when their Intereſt, Duty, and Deſire is, to be moſt ſerious in ingaging their Heart for God; when they are about to make the neareſt Approaches to Heaven; when they do ſo, or when they have juſt done ſo. This is one part of their *Burden*, which may well make them deſire a State of perfect Holineſs, and full Conformity to Chriſt.

*Thirdly*, The Apprehenſion and Senſe of their *Diſtance from Chriſt*, while they are in the Body, is another reaſon why they thus Groan. *Chriſt* is *now* in us, the Hope of Glory; but our Injoyment of him is very imperfect in compariſon of what we expect. And if we have any true Love to Chriſt, we muſt needs deſire to be with him, to behold his Glory, to love him more, and feel the Communications of his Love in a higher degree. If we know any thing of the Sweetneſs of Communion with him, we muſt needs breath after fuller Meaſures of it: And the ſenſe of our preſent diſtant State, wherein we know ſo little of God and Chriſt, and love him leſs; wherein we continue to ſin againſt him, and daily ſmart under the bitter Fruits of ſin, and dwell among thoſe who provoke and diſhonour him every day; may well make us ſigh to be *at home*, that we may injoy that Preſence of Chriſt, and Communion with him, which cannot be attained but by Dying. Do we not own it beſt, *to be with Chriſt?* the beſt Company, the beſt Place, the beſt Condition and State, the beſt Enjoyments? Certainly the little we know of him, is enough to make us deſire to be with him; the little we have already received, may make us long to receive more.

Such will not ſay with the *Shunamite*, when the Prophet offered to ſpeak for her to the King; I am already at home; *I dwell among my own People*; I am pleaſed with my Station; I like my preſent abode; I am not ambitious of any better; I care not for any other Life, or World, if I may but have this, *&c.* 2 Kings 4.

'No, ſays a Holy Soul, I am a Stranger here on Earth, a Paſſenger, a Pilgrim through this World, *as all my Fathers were*; I ſeek another Country, an Heavenly one; I belong to another City that hath Foundations; My Principal Kindred, Relations and Friends are not here, but in that other Country. My Father is in Heaven, my Elder Brother is at his Right Hand in Glory, and the moſt of my Brethren are gone to Him, and the reſt are haſtening as well as I; My Heart and Hopes are there, I deſire to be one of them, I would be glad to make one of that Great and General Aſſembly of the *Firſt-born*, where is God the Judge of all, and the Bleſſed Redeemer, *with an innumerable Company of Angels, and the Spirits of Juſt Men made perfect*: Yea, I groan under this Diſtance, and Abſence from my deareſt Lord. Were it put to my choice, I would venture

‘ upon any Difficulties, and Dangers, and
‘ Deaths, rather than it ſhould continue:
‘ Nothing but the ſenſe of Duty to him,
‘ to ſerve the purpoſes of his Glory here,
‘ can make me brook ſo long a Separation:
‘ otherwiſe, whatever the League
‘ be between me and this Body, I had rather
‘ be with Chtiſt, though that be
‘ diſſolved: If there be no way to come
‘ to Heaven but by Dying, I would rather
‘ dye to be there, than live in this
‘ Abſence from Chriſt my Saviour; that I
‘ may doubt of his Love no more, and
‘ feel no more effects of his Diſpleaſure;
‘ that he may hide his Face from me
‘ no more, but with everlaſting Compaſſions
‘ receive and imbrace me. And what
‘ is there in Death, that I ſhould fear it,
‘ that is half ſo frightful and grievous
‘ as my Abſence from Chriſt? What is
‘ there in this Earthly Tabernacle, or in
‘ this preſent World, that I ſhould ſo
‘ love an Abode in it, and not be willing
‘ to quit it, that I may be preſent with
‘ the Lord! O let him call me when he
‘ will, if he will receive my departing
‘ Soul! Let him draw me through the
‘ Duſt of the Earth, if he will draw me
‘ nearer to himſelf, and bring me to his
‘ bleſſed Preſence. ’Tis *there* I long to
‘ be, ’tis that my Heart is ſet upon, that
‘ is

‘ is it I groan for ; I am deſirous of his ‘ Preſence, *to behold his Glory*, and re‑ ‘ ceive the Communications and Reflections of it. Henceforth I would not ‘ be unwilling and backward to go unto ‘ him, but rather ſay, *O when ſhall I come* ‘ *and appear before him !* But there is a ‘ fourth Particular to which I haſten.

*Fourthly*, The *Unequal Communications* of Light, and Grace, and Comfort, while in the Body, make them thus groan to be uncloath'd. There is not that Stedineſs, and Conſtancy in ſuch Communications from God in our preſent State, as hereafter there will be. Neither is it ſuitable to the Character and Condition of Strangers, and Travellers, that there ſhould. Sometimes therefore we may have better Entertainment than at other times : We may not expect to have the ſame Sunſhine, and fair Weather, during our whole Pilgrimage. The Light of God's Countenance may be ſometimes cover'd, and overcaſt. But, when we ſhall be at home in our Father's Houſe, in the preſence of our Lord, there will be a fulneſs of uninterrupted Joy, and unchangeable Pleaſure. Chriſtians are now ſometimes in the Mount, and then again in the Valley : Sometimes they can Rejoyce, ſoon after they are Mourning and Dejected. Sometimes the Love of God is ſtrong and vigorous, ſoon after the Love of the World prevails again, in ſome ſad Inſtance or other, to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and cauſe him to withdraw. Sometimes they can apply the Promiſes with Comfort, and go to *GOD*, with Holy Confidence, as to *their Father*, and think of Eternity, and another World, with tranſporting Joy, and of the Heavenly Inheritance as *their own*, with raiſed Deſires, and Delight; within a Day, or two; it may be, they are again plunged in the Mire, and ſunk into the Depths of Darkneſs, and Diſcouragement, ſo as not to be able to hold up their Heads.

Sometimes at the Table of the Lord, they have Refreſhing Views of the Glory of *J. Chriſt*, in his Love and Grace, as bearing the Curſe which they deſerv'd; as manifeſting his ſpecial Kindneſs, and Sealing his Love, with particular Application to their Souls, as Intereſted in all the Benefits of his Meritorious Death. Hereby they are Reviv'd, and Quickned, and Strengthned, and enabled to ſay, I *am as one who hath found favour in his ſight; My Beloved is mine, and I am his. He led me into his Banquetting Houſe, his*

*Banner over me was Love.* He called to me, as to the Unbelieving Diſciple, ‘ Come, *Reach hither thy hand, thruſt it* ‘ *into my ſide and heart*, See how I have ‘ loved thee; Come, *feel the print of the* ‘ *Spear, and of the Nails in my Hands* ‘ *and Feet*; ſee what I ſuffer'd for thee, ‘ to expreſs my Love; What can I deny ‘ thee after this? Upon this an exulting Joy muſt needs enſue, but it did not laſt. And it may be the next Month they bewail that it is quite otherwiſe with 'em; Sometimes their Hearts are enlarged, and delighted in Prayer, Thankſgiving, Sabbaths, Sacraments, *&c.* 'Tis their Joy ſometimes to go to the Houſe of God, and call upon his Name, and be employ'd in Heavenly Work, to Sing the High Praiſes of God in the Solemn Aſſemblies; But this is not conſtant, and equal, not always Alike.

Could a Chriſtian Act Faith at all times, as ſometimes he is enabled to do; could he every day feel the Love of Chriſt, and expreſs his own, as ſometimes; could he always reſign, devote, yield himſelf to the Lord, with that entire Adoration, Submiſſion, and Satisfaction in the Divine Will, and Glory, Goodneſs and Wiſdom, as ſometimes, and on ſome Occaſions; he would hardly believe himſelf a Stranger and Foreigner in this World, he would be tempted to take Earth for Heaven, and ſay *'tis good to be here*: But whatever Influences of Grace and Comfort we now receive, they are not ſteady, equal, and conſtant; and 'tis but fit that we who are only Paſſengers through this World, and are not at home, ſhould be thus made ſenſible of our true Character and Condition, and not find the Way, or Weather alike good, or our own Health equal, or our Accommodations, Proviſions, and Entertainment here. This helps to make us long for a Better State and Life.

The *Fourth Thing* propoſed is to prove that this Bleſſed State and Life, which Chriſtians deſire and long for, is not ſuch a one, wherein they are to be alway *without a Body*, but *to have their Bodies raiſed*, *changed*, and *glorified*, or *to be cloathed upon with an Houſe from Heaven.*

The *Poſſibility of the Reſurrection of the Body*, the *Probability*, and the *Certainty* of it, have been often and largely proved. That it is *poſſible*, both on the part of the *Agent* and *Patient*: Who, that conſiders the *Divine Omniſcience* and *Power*, can doubt, but that God can re-make an Humane Body of that Duſt, into which it is reſolved; and however it be diſperſed, find out, and rally the ſeveral parts together, and unite them one to another? What impoſſibility is it, that the diſperſed Parts of a Man's Body ſhould be diſpoſed into their due Situation and Order, and reduced to a Temper, fit to diſcharge the Functions and Operations of Life? and that the Soul ſhould be Re-united to a Body thus Reſtored? How is it *Impoſſible*? Or why ſhould it be *Difficult* to him, who did at firſt frame and temper this Body out of the Duſt; and inſpire a reaſonable Soul into it; and out of a meer Chaos make this Beautiful World? He formed and faſhioned our Bodies in the Womb? which is as ſtrange an inſtance of Almighty Power, as the Reſurrection from the Dead will be: He gives us every Morning, and every Spring, a little Repreſentation of the Reſurrection of the Dead: He makes *the dry Bones to live, and is able to ſubdue all things to himſelf.* Therefore to ſuch as doubt, or deny this, we muſt ſay, as our Saviour to the *Sadducees; You err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the Power of God.* Or, we may Expoſtulate, as St. *Paul* doth, *What? Doth it ſeem Incredible to you, that God* Acts 26. 8.

*God ſhould raiſe the Dead?* Is there any Atome of our Duſt can eſcape his Knowledge, though cloathed with different forms and figures, and hath paſſed through various Changes, ſwallowed by Beaſts, or conſumed by Fire, or ſcattered by the Wind? Doth not the Foundation remain, though it put on a Variety of Forms? May not the Subſtance be intire, notwithſtanding all the transforming Alterations that can be ſuppoſed? The Divine Knowledge being infinite, and his Providence reaching to the leaſt, as well as to the greateſt parts of the World, to the Beginning, Progreſs and Diſſolution of every one, he may eaſily call forth every part, when the appointed time comes for the Re-union of Soul and Body.

We muſt queſtion the *Divine Omniſcience*, as well as Power, if we doubt of this. And are there not many things in the firſt Creation, every whit as incredible, as the Collection of our ſcatter'd Duſt, and compacting theſe diſperſed Atomes into an Humane Body? Can it be harder to reſtore thoſe things that were, than to create thoſe things that were not? Is it more difficult to an Infinite Arm, to Almighty and Invincible Power, and Infinite Knowledge, to do this, than to make both Soul and Body at firſt? Is not the Bleſſed Redeemer, who hath all Power in Heaven and Earth, able to make good his Word, who is alſo the *Amen, the faithful and true Witneſs?* and therefore to deceive us with a Promiſe and Expectation of what he cannot, or will not do, would be an eternal Reflection on his Truth, and Holineſs, and other Attributes.

God hath already raiſed Some from the Dead, whereof we have Inſtances both in the Old Teſtament, and in the New, Many were raiſed by *Chriſt* himſelf, and *many of the Saints came out of their Graves at the Death of Chriſt, and went into the Holy City, and appeared publickly to many.* If it be inquired Where were the Souls of thoſe that were thus raiſed, during the ſpace between their Death and Reſurrection? This being not to be known but by Revelation, and that ſpeaking nothing of it, we may ſafely acknowledge our Ignorance. It was a *peculiar Caſe*, that does not make a general Rule; and therefore our Inquiry about it muſt be very wary. It is ſufficient to ſay, they were in the Hands of God, wherever they were. What if there were a particular Diſpenſation in regard of them, different from the Caſe of thoſe, who are not to be raiſed till the laſt Day: Nothing can well be propoſed in Anſwer to ſuch a Queſtion, but what is conjectural.

Therefore rejecting all Suppoſitions that cannot be reconciled to other expreſs Doctrines, and Articles of Chriſtianity, we may ſay, That either (1.) they were received to *Heaven*, or (2.) remained in *the Air*, at a little diſtance from the Body; Or, (3.) They continued in *the Body*, which was to be quickly raiſed again, without animating and informing that Body. If we ſay the *firſt*, and that theſe Souls returned from Heaven to their Bodies again, for the Manifeſtation of the Glory of Chriſt in ſuch a Miracle; it is no more unſuitable and unbecoming an Holy Soul to be willing of this, and to be thus imployed, than was the Humiliation of the Son of God, for the Glory of his Father. If we ſay the *ſecond*, that they remained in the Air not far from the Body, it being but for a little while, What Inconvenience, or ill Conſequence can be aſſigned of ſuch a Suppoſition? If we rather chuſe the *third* way of ſolving this, it is conſiderable what the Apoſtle *Paul* ſpeaks of *Eutichus*, whom he raiſed from the Acts20.10. Dead; *Be not troubled, for his Life, his*

*Soul is in him*, tho' it did not then animate, and inform his Body. As to thoſe who were raiſed at the time of Chriſt's Death, it was only for a little while, to bear Teſtimony to our Lord, and then they laid down their Bodies again, and returned to the Reſt and Glory of Departed Souls.

But, *The Reſurrection of our Bleſſed Saviour*, is the great thing here to be conſidered, as an Argument both of the Poſſibility, and Certainty of our Reſurrection. For thus the Apoſtle argues at large, 1 *Cor.* 15. *v.* 12. If it be Preached, and Proved, and Aſſured to us, that Chriſt is Riſen, *How is it that ſome ſay, There is no Reſurrection of the Dead?* that is, How can any deny the Poſſibility of it, when there is ſuch an Evidence and Proof? How can it be doubted, but that the ſame Power which raiſed Chriſt from the Dead, can alſo quicken our Mortal Bodies? when *the exceeding greatneſs of his mighty Power was diſplayed in raiſing Chriſt from the Dead?* Eph. 1. 19, 20. His Reſurrection aſſures us, that his Death and Sacrifice were Satisfactory to the Juſtice of God; and all the Promiſes that concern the Bleſſings of the Everlaſting Covenant, the ſure Mercies of *David*, are hereby confirmed, *Acts* XIII.

32, 33, 34. *We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the Promiſe which wa made unto the Fathers, God hath fulfille the ſame unto us their Children, in tha he hath raiſed up Jeſus again*; as it i alſo written in the ſecond *Pſalm*, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And, as concerning that he raiſed him u from the dead, now no more to return t corruption; he ſaid on this wiſe, I wil give you the ſure Mercies of* Davi And therefore after his Reſurrection, h ſaluted his Diſciples with *Peace*, *John* 2 21. And God, as *the God of Peace*, i ſaid to raiſe Chriſt from the Dead: Fo had he not been reconciled, he woul have left him in the Grave. Now bo the *Moral*, and the *Natural* Impoſſibility of our Reſurrection is removed b the *Death*, and the *Reſurrection* o Chriſt; The former by the Merit of hi Death, and the latter by his Reſurrecti on: for he can do the ſame for all Believers. If his Power be not ſufficient t raiſe us, it could not be ſufficient t raiſe him. He is now a *Quickening Sp rit*, able to give Life, as the firſt *Ada* to tranſmit Death to his Poſterity. An he was raiſed as a *Publick Perſon*, an the Head of his Church.

1 Cor. 15. 45.

Our Perſons are Redeemed by Chriſt, as conſiſting of Soul and Body; and our Bodies Sanctified by him, and are the Temples of the Holy Ghoſt, and therefore ſhall be raiſed by him. Yea, we are ſaid to *riſe with him*, and to be *ſet down in heavenly places*, *in*, and *with him*. It is not more true that he died for our Sins, than that he roſe again for our *Juſtification*; and if for *that*, he roſe for our *Reſurrection* too. For the Guilt of Sin being removed, which is the meritorious Cauſe of Death; *Death*, which is the Puniſhment, ſhall not remain, but be ſwallowed up in Victory: Whereas *it* lives, and reigns, and keeps the Field, till the Reſurrection. But we are aſſured that *The Sea, and Death, and Hades (the Univerſal Grave) ſhall give up their Dead*, Rev. 20. 13. And then not only the Sting of Death, but Death it ſelf ſhall dye, and ceaſe for ever: for *there ſhall be no more death*, Rev. 21. 4. Our dead Bodies ſhall then live, ſo as to dye no more. For, *If we believe on him that raiſed Chriſt from the dead, the ſame Spirit, that raiſed Chriſt, ſhall be the Author of our Reſurrection*, Rom. 8. 23. And, *If we believe that Jeſus dyed and roſe again, even them alſo which ſleep in Jeſus, will God bring with him*, 1 Theſſ.

4. 14.

4. 14. He that was dead is now alive, and behold he lives for evermore; and *he hath the Keys of Death and Hell*, Rev. 1. 18. And he has expreſly told us, that the Hour is coming, in the which *All that are in their Graves ſhall hear his Voice, and ſhall come forth; They that have done good unto the Reſurrection of Life; and they that have done evil, unto the Reſurrection of Damnation*, John 5. 28, 29. And this is the Will of God that ſent him, that every one who believeth on him, ſhall have everlaſting Life; and *he will raiſe him up at the laſt day*, John 6. 40. The like he declares afterwards to *Martha*, *I am the Reſurrection and the Life, he that believeth in me, tho' he were dead, yet ſhall he live*, John 11. 25. He is the Firſt-born from the dead, and Believers are *the Children of the Reſurrection*, Coloſſ. 1. 18. His Reſurrection not only proves the Poſſibility of ours, but it is the Pledge of the Performance. *God having raiſed him up, hath looſed the pains of Death, ſince it was impoſſible he ſhould be holden by them.* Naturally impoſſible, becauſe of his Divine Power; and legally impoſſible, becauſe Divine Juſtice, after ſuch a Satisfaction as the Death of Chriſt, required that he ſhould be rai-

ſed to Life, and receive a Diſcharge and Reward.

We could hardly believe the Dead ſhould riſe to Life, if Chriſt by his own Reſurrection, and by raiſing others, had not proved it poſſible, and already done. But he hath not conquer'd Death for himſelf alone, but for his Members too, and to them he has promiſed, that *They ſhall never ſee Death*, or come within the Proſpect or Danger of it: And not only ſhall not, but *cannot dye any more*, after the Reſurrection, for they *ſhall be equal to the Angels*, Luke 20. 36. His Victory over Death was declared by his Reſurrection, and his Entrance into Glory did Compleat the Conqueſt. Now as Chriſt hath carried his Humane Nature into Heaven, we are to be made like him, and bear the Image of the Heavenly *Adam*, and therefore our Fleſh ſhall be raiſed too. *He is the firſt-fruits of them that ſleep*, 1 Cor. 15. 20. And, it is *obſervable, that he Roſe from the Dead on that Day, whereon the *Jews* obſerve their *Feaſt of Firſt-fruits*. That Feaſt was not ſtinted to any Day of the Month, as other Feaſts were, but was to be always on the Morrow after the Paſs-over-Sabbath, that ſo it might fall always on *the Firſt day of the Week*, the

Joh. 11. 26.

* Biſhop *Uſher*.

Day of Chriſt's Reſurrection. Well therefore might the Apoſtle ſay, *Chriſt being Riſen, is become the Firſt-fruits of them that ſleep*; As the Offering of the Firſt-fruits amongſt the *Jews*, Conſecrated all the reſt.

Neither can we ſuppoſe our Happineſs would be compleat, without the Reſurrection of the Body. As Soul and Body concur to the Conſtitution of Man, the Soul is in a State of Widowhood, till re-united to the Body. And in this Life the Body has a ſhare in the Work and Service of the *Man*, which is to be rewarded or puniſhed, as executing the deſigns of the Soul. And the Members of the Body ſerve as *Members of Righteouſneſs*, or *Sin*. The Law of God commands the intire Man, compoſed of Soul and Body, and this Law is obeyed or violated by both, tho' the moral good or evil of our Actions be chiefly attributed to the Soul, as the principal Agent. But on this Account the Body ſhall partake, in the Rewards or Puniſhments of the next Life, if *the Intire Perſon* be to be recompenced. And it is with reſpect to the Body, (that ſeemed to be loſt) that the Reſurrection is promiſed; the Body reſolved into Duſt, or ſwallowed in the Sea, or conſumed by the Fire:

Such Promiſes of the Reſurrection are made to Believers for their Encouragement and Hope. Beſides, there are many Objects in the Heavenly State that do ſuppoſe a Body, and are to be diſcerned by our Bodily Senſes, as, the glorious Beauty and Magnificence of the bleſſed Manſions, and the Humane Nature of our glorious Redeemer, *&c.* On which, and many other Accounts, *the Body* ſhall be raiſed, and changed, and glorified.

Reaſon it ſelf would make this *Probable.* Man being created with a Body and a Soul, which have ſo natural an Inclination to one another, that there is an Appetite and Deſire, as it ſeems, to be united, and co-operate together, and many of our Capacities, of Joy and Comfort, as well as of Sorrow and Grief, reſult from, and depend upon this Union. In order therefore to the full and final Felicity that God will confer on ſome, and for the greater Miſery wherewith Divine Juſtice will puniſh others, it is very probable from Principles of Reaſon, that God will raiſe the Bodies of Men: That being united to their Souls, they may be better capable of enjoying the promiſed Happineſs, or ſuffering the threatned miſery of the next World. This ſeems to be the ſenſe of *Job* 14. 14. where he ſays, that *all the days of my appointed time, I will wait till my change come*, ſpeaking of *the Reſurrection of the Body.* There is hope of a Tree, he ſaith, if it be cut down, that it will ſprout again; but Man dyeth, and where is he? he lyeth down, and riſeth not, till the Heavens be no more. *If a Man dye, ſhall he live again? All the days of my appointed Time, &c.* According to common Apprehenſion, and Appearance, the State of Man at Death is hopeleſs; But he profeſſeth his Expectation, that at a *ſet* and *appointed Time*, God would remember him, ſo as to recall him out of the Grave: And therefore puts the queſtion, *If a Man dye, ſhall he live again?* And till the appointed time when God ſhould revive him, out of the Duſt, he would wait for that glorious Change, when *God ſhall have a deſire to the work of his hands*, i. e. not always forget to reſtore and perfect his own Creature.

There are many Images and Reſemblances of this. As in *the Corn* by which we live, when it is caſt on the Earth, and buried in the Ground, that it may corrupt; after it is corrupted, it revives and multiplies: Our Bodies are fed with this conſtant Experiment. And the Apoſtles

poſtles ſimilitude of a Grain of Corn ſown in the Ground, that it riſeth multiplied, augmented, and adorned, ſets out the advantagious Difference between the Qualities of our Bodies when they dye, and when they ſhall be raiſed. And herein he imitates the manner of the *Jews*, who were wont familiarly to illuſtrate the Buſineſs of the Reſurrection, by the Similitude of Seed ſown in the Ground, and ſpringing up again. And what can we diſcern in a ſmall Corn, or little Seed, of a Tree, with Body, Bark, Branches, Leaves, Flowers, Fruit? and yet afterwards we behold them, when the Seed hath been ſown in the Ground. The Apoſtle at large inſiſts on this Similitude of *Seed*, to explain the manner of the *Reſurrection*, 1 *Cor*.15.35. *So* alſo *is the Reſurrection of the Dead*, So is this mortal Body to be the *Seed*, and material Principle of our Reſurrection: For *that which is ſown is not quickened, except it dye.* And *ſo* is this Seed of our mortal Body to dye, and be corrupted, before it ſhall be raiſed again. And *So* is this dead corrupted Body to be raiſed and quickened by the Power of God. For *God gives to every Seed a Body as it pleaſes him.* And *ſo* are our dead Bodies to be raiſed again, into the proper form and kind of Humane Bodies; for unto every Seed God giveth *his own Body*. And, *Laſtly*, *So is the Reſurrection of the Dead*; that is, *So* are thoſe Humane Bodies to be changed, and altered by the Reſurrection, as that which is but bare Seed when it is ſown; when it is quickened, it ſprings up into a long Stalk and Ear: *So* the raiſed Body ſhall be changed for the better.

* Mr. *Baxter* of Self-denial, *p.* 206.

I find this well illuſtrated after * another manner. That the dead Body of a Man may be ſuppoſed to have a living Root, as truly as the Plants in Winter. The Soul is the Root of the Body, and the Soul is ſtill alive; And Chriſt is the Root of the Soul, and he is ſtill alive: For tho' we are dead, *our Life is hid with Chriſt in God; and when he who is our Life ſhall appear*, at the Spring of the Reſurrection, *we ſhall alſo appear with him in Glory*, Coloſſ. 3. 3, 4. There is a Relative Union between Soul and Body, and a deep rooted Love of the Soul to its Body, and Inclination to it; ſo that it is mindful of it, and waits with longing for that Hour when the Command of God, ſhall ſend it to revive that Body. Why may not the living Soul, that is the Root and Life of the Body in the Duſt, be the Inſtrument of God, to inform its own Body, as it will be the Principle that ſhall re-inform it? The Body in the Grave hath its own Relation to Chriſt, who is ſtill Living, and reſolved and ingaged by Promiſe, and inclined by Love, to revive that Body. And when the Hour comes, for this Soul that waits, to be ſent again into the Body, what can hinder? The very Love of the Soul to its Body, and its deſire to be re-united, is a kind of Natural Cauſe of the Reſurrection.

A Candle not lighted, is as far from Light, and as much without it, as a dead Body is without Life; and yet one touch of a lighted Candle will light that which never was lighted before: And ſo may one touch of the living Soul, that is now with Chriſt, put Life into the Body, that lyes in the Duſt. And as the lighted Candle makes the other like it, and Communicates of its Nature to it; ſo may the glorified Soul Communicate a new kind of Excellency to the Body, which it never had before; even to be a Spiritual, Glorious, Incorruptible, and Immortal Body. And God takes the Soul to Heaven before hand, that it may be firſt Glorified, and ſo be fit to communicate Glory to the Body. So that there is more reaſon for the Reſurrection of the Body, though it be turned to Earth; than there is reaſon that a Candle, that is gone out, ſhould be lighted again by another; or than there is reaſon, that I ſhould put on my Cloaths in the Morning which I put off at Night: For Nature diſpoſeth me to abhor Nakedneſs, and deſire my Cloaths, and therefore in the Morning I will put them on: So Nature teaches the Separated Soul to deſire a Re-union with its Body: And therefore when the Reſurrection Morning comes, it will gladly take the word from Chriſt, and give that vital Touch to the Body, that ſhall revive it; and ſo put on its ancient Garment, but wonderfully changed for the better, &c.

If it be inquired, How can *the Body*, after ſo many Changes, be raiſed and re-united to the Soul? And what need is there of Aſſerting, That for Subſtance it ſhall be *the Same*? It ought to be conſider'd, that the very word *Reſurrection*, doth ſuppoſe, or imply this. It is the Body falls to the Ground, when the Spirit goes upward; *That Body* then that fell, is to be raiſed again, and no other Body than that. *This Mortal Body* ſhall be quickened by the Spirit of Chriſt, that *now* falls to the Ground: The ſame

Temple that was deſtroyed, ſhall be rebuilt; The ſame Tabernacle that was diſſolved, ſhall be raiſed. We are bid to fear God, who can deſtroy *Soul and Body in Hell*, Matth. 10. 28. What cauſe of fear, if *this* very Body be not to be raiſed? *This Corruptible muſt put on Incorruption, this Mortal put on Immortality:* As the *Body* of Chriſt, which is our Exemplar, with which he roſe, was *the ſame* that he depoſited in the Grave; and as the Bodies of thoſe whom our Saviour raiſed, when he was on Earth, were the ſame with thoſe in which they dyed. And how ſhall the Graves, and Sea give up their Dead at the Laſt Day, *Rev.* 20.13? What need of this, if the ſame Bodies are not to be raiſed; for they can give up no other Bodies than what they received. Theſe Receptacles of the Dead, might be ſuffered to be quiet for ever, and the Bodies that reſt there to remain there for ever, if we do not expect *the ſame Body* to be raiſed.

And as the Body was the Servant of the Soul, in Good or Evil Actions, * He that did Good or Evil in one Body, is not to be Rewarded or Puniſhed in another: for that other Body would not be a part of the whole. Our preſent Bodies

* *Iſid.Peluſ.* lib.4. Epiſt. 204.

dies are the Members of Chriſt, and th Temples of the Holy Ghoſt, and he wil not ſuffer them Eternally to be loſt. What words can more plainly expreſs, that it is *the ſame Body for Subſtance*, than the putting on of Incorruption, and Immortality; declaring, that the Corruptible, Mortal Body, that is laid in the Grave, is that which ſhall be Immortal and Incorruptible?

This has been the common Opinion of Chriſtians in all Ages. Upon this account the Primitive Chriſtians were ſo careful of the Bodies of their deceaſed Friends, manifeſting their Belief, that their Souls ſhould meet theſe Bodies again. On this account their *Pagan* Adverſaries, to ſhow their ſpite and malice, when they had burnt their Bodies to Aſhes, ſcattered their Duſt in the Air, or had thrown them into Rivers; that, if it were poſſible, they might deprive them of all hopes of a *Reſurrection*, and make it impoſſible; Some of them triumph'd, ſaying, *Now let us ſee whether they can riſe again, whether their God can help them, to deliver them out of our hands.*

But tho' the Bodies ſhall then, for *Subſtance*, be *the ſame*, with thoſe we now have, yet the Modes and Qualities of them will be ſo altered, that they will be quite another kind of Bodies, than thoſe we have for the preſent. In reference to this Expected Change, the Apoſtle ſaith in this *Chapter*, *ver.* 7. *That we walk by Faith, not by Sight.* We do not yet know what our Happy State, by that Change, will be; but in another place he doth more particularly ſpeak of it, and more diſtinctly; *viz.* 1 *Cor.* 15. 42, 43, 44.

1. That our vile Bodies, *Sown in Diſhonour, ſhould be Raiſed in Glory*; ſhall be made *Glorious, like the Glorious Body of Chriſt*, Phil. 3. 21. *That which is ſown in diſhonour, ſhall be raiſed in glory, and bear the Image of the Heavenly Adam*: Shall be like the *Glorious Body of Chriſt* in Perfection of Parts, probably in External Form and Figure, and it may be Stature too. But, for certain, how vile and mean ſoever the Matter of theſe Bodies now be, however they may corrupt and putrifie in the Grave, they ſhall come forth in a bright and beautiful form: Compared to which, the moſt Exquiſite Beauty is but Darkneſs and Deformity. *For the Righteous ſhall ſhine as the Sun, in the Firmament of their Father*, Matth. 13. 43. As the Stars of

Heaven differ from a Clod of Earth, or a Carrion in the Ditch, ſo will their Glorified Bodies from this Earthly Houſe. The very Activity, Sprightfulneſs, and joy of their Glorified Souls, will make their Faces ſhine, and give the Countenance an amiable Air. Yea, *Solomon, in all his Glory, was not arrayed like one of theſe* Children of the Reſurrection, glittering with Heavenly brightneſs, and deck'd with Light, as with a Garment. The beams of Chriſts Glory, who is the Sun of Righteouſneſs ſhall reflect a Luſtre upon them, beſides what ſhall be tranſmitted from their Glorified Souls.

Our Lord gave a Specimen of this at his *Transfiguration*, and his Glorified Body is to be the Pattern of ours. His Face did then ſhine as the Sun, *Matth.* 17. 2. the Subſtance remaining, there was a Glorious Appearance: For he had the ſame Lineaments in *Tabor*, as at the foot of the *Mount*; otherwiſe *Peter* could not have diſtinguiſhed him from *Moſes*, and *Elias*. But his Body now in Heaven doth more excel in Glory that Body he had on Earth, than the Glory of the Sun ſurpaſſes that of a Glow-worm, not only from the Glory of his Soul, but of his Divinity ſhining through it. What a wonderful Change muſt paſs on the

Bodies of the Glorified Saints, to make them capable of beholding this Glory of Chriſt; when a little Glimpſe of it on Mount *Tabor*, was more than a Mortal Eye could bear; it caſt *Peter* into an Extaſie? Our Lord forbad his Diſciples to ſpeak of the Glory of his *Transfiguration*, till after he was Riſen from the Dead; but now is willing, and hath commanded it ſhould be ſpoken of, all the World over: That our Thoughts and Apprehenſions may be raiſed, to conſider that Glory, which this did but imperfectly ſhadow and repreſent. For if before his Reſurrection, and Aſcenſion, the Humane Nature of Chriſt had ſuch a Glory, how much more in Heaven? And *there* we ſhall be like him. *Moſes* on the Mount did ſo ſhine, that the People were afraid to come near him, and he was forced to caſt a Vail upon his Face. One Ray of Chriſt's Glory on the Holy Martyr *Stephen*, made his Countenance ſhine with an Angelical Luſtre. And *when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him*; he will then be admired of all them that believe? We ſhall be like *Him*, who is the Bleſſed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, who alone hath Immortality, dwelling in that Light which no Man can approach unto;

whom no Man hath ſeen, or can ſee, 1 *Tim.* 6. 15, 16.

2. There will be a Change of theſe Bodies in reſpect of *Spirituality.* It is ſown a Natural Body, and raiſed a *Spiritual one.* The Groſsneſs and Feculency that now adheres to it, ſhall be purged off. Not Spiritual in oppoſition to *Corporeal*, that is a Contradiction; but in oppoſition to *Natural*; of a Spiritual Nature in oppoſition to this infirm Fleſh. A Body raiſed to the higheſt Degree of Excellence, as near the Angelical State as a Body can be brought. It is called our Houſe, *from Heaven*, ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, not ἀπ', not an Houſe that is to deſcend from Heaven to us, but that is of an *Heavenly Nature*, all of a Piece with Heaven. So Purified, as to be Aſſimilated to the Heavenly Region, where we are to dwell for ever. *The firſt Man was of the Earth, Earthly; the ſecond Man is the Lord from Heaven:* And from each of them we partake of an anſwerable Nature. *As is the Earthly, ſuch are they that are Earthly*, even all of us in our fleſhly State, having earthly Bodies from an earthly *Adam*, and natural Bodies from the natural *Adam.* And *as is the Heavenly, ſuch are they that are Heavenly*: For Chriſt will make them like himſelf.

As he hath an Heavenly Spiritual Body, and not an Earthly Natural Body, ſo ſhall his Members have, *that they may be like Him*. And as we have born the Image of the Earthly, in having a Natural Fleſhly Body, we ſhall alſo bear the Image of the Heavenly *Adam*, in having a *Spiritual Body*, not needing the uſe of Meats, or Drinks, or any of the Refreſhments or Pleaſures of the Animal Life, or be imployed in any of thoſe Acts, whereby the Body is now denominated *Natural*, and ſuited to this Earthly State. But our Bodies ſhall then be *Spiritual*, ſuited to the Life that Angels and Saints live in Heaven; every way greatly refined, and the Activity of our Spirits improved, without the Defects and Infirmities of Fleſh and Blood; They ſhall be inveſted with Cæleſtial Qualities, depending wholly on the Soul, and yielding ready Obedience, and Conformity to its Deſires and Motions, executing all its Commands with Pleaſure and Diſpatch. Yea, the Imployment and Operations of the Body ſhall be raiſed above thoſe in the preſent ſtate, as much as the Imployment of a King exceeds that of a Scullion. This Spiritual Body one repreſents by *Organized Light*, as a Torch or Wood that looſeth its droſſy and foggy Qualities, when heightened into a pure Flame, or Minerals heightened into Spirits.

3. The Bodies of the Saints ſhall be changed from Weak and Paſſive, into *Active* and *Powerful Bodies*. Sown in *Weakneſs*, but raiſed in *Power*. They are now dull and ſluggiſh, but then they ſhall be nimble and active, like the Body of Chriſt, that at his Aſcenſion into Heaven, (being done in one Day) moved many Thouſands of Miles in an Hour: The diſtance between the higheſt Heavens and this Earth, being computed to be ſome hundred Millions of Miles. They ſhall be raiſed with Angelical Agility and Strength: He that is weak among them ſhall be as *David*; he that is as *David*, ſhall be as *an Angel of God*; moving without Difficulty, and without Wearineſs. Now we often find the *Body* cannot keep Pace with the Soul, the Fleſh is weak when the Spirit is willing, but it ſhall be raiſed in *Power*. It is now liable to Diſeaſes and Paſſions, can do little and ſuffers much; but no Diſeaſes or Infirmities ſhall hereafter hinder its Motions, or impair its Health. A glorified Body will move without Wearineſs, and faſt without Hunger, and wake for ever, without need of Refreſhment.

Herein there will be a ſuitableneſs to the Activity of a glorified Soul; and without this they could not bear the weight of the Heavenly Glory. Beſides, they are to indure to all Eternity, without Reparation by Meat, and Drink, and Sleep.

4. They ſhall be *Incorruptible*, and *Immortal*. It is ſown in Corruption, it is raiſed in Incorruption. This Mortal ſhall put on Immortality, They ſhall dye no more, but live for ever. Therefore the Day of the Reſurrection, is called *the Redemption of our Bodies*. They ſhall not be liable to be put out of tune, by Infirmities, and Pains, and numberleſs Diſeaſes, as now; which often make Life it ſelf a Burden. They ſhall be Immortal, without needing that Labour by Day, or Sleep by Night, which now we beſtow to ſupply their Neceſſities, and repair their Decays, and prevent Death. Now the Body has the Seeds of Mortality and Corruption, but ſhall then be refined from all ſuch Principles. There ſhall not be a Tendency to Death, in the Nature and Conſtitution of the Body; ſuch will be the glorious Change, that they *cannot dye any more*, Luke 20. 36. They that were raiſed by Chriſt, when on Earth, they dyed again, their *ſecond*

*Life* was not more exempt from Death, than their *Firſt*: But at the Reſurrection, *Mortality ſhall be ſwallowed up of Life*; it ſhall loſe its Power and Force for ever.

I may Apply this by Inferences of Truth and Duty.

*Firſt*, Let us not imagine the State of the Dead to be a State of *Non-exiſtence*, or *Annihilation*, that the Soul periſhes with the Body, and that we are without Hope of its Reſurrection. Whereas, when our Soul paſſes into a ſtate of Reſt and Joy with Chriſt, our Fleſh reſts in Hope that theſe Bodies ſhall be raiſed and re-united to their glorious Souls. We are to paſs through the Valley of Death to a Bleſſed Life. This is the Deſire and Hope of all the Followers of Chriſt. *And theſe very Deſires of a Bleſſed Life beyond the Grave, will do much to prove the Certainty of it.*

We muſt have ſtrange Thoughts of the infinitely Wiſe and Holy God, and of his Love and Goodneſs, to imagine he ſhould give his Creatures ſuch a Knowledge of himſelf that makes them deſire more, even a Deſire to know, and love, and Enjoy him *perpetually*, and yet never intend an Eternal Communication of himſelf, anſwerable to thoſe Deſires. Can we think the Bleſſed God would deceive and mock thoſe,that deſire to ſeek , and pleaſe him? by enabling them to aſpire after a Happineſs in his Preſence, and by giving them a Capacity for it; And then to fruſtrate and diſappoint his own Work? Can we think, that God would excite their Deſires after Another, and a Better State, and yet never admit them to it? Can we imagine that God would raiſe their Deſires from Sin and this World, to himſelf and Heaven, and that theſe ſhall never be anſwered in a happy Iſſue? Shall the very Sanctification of our Nature prepare for our Torment, and help to make us Miſerable? Will the God of Love enable us by his Grace to hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, and after the Bleſſed Viſion of his Face in Glory, and yet never deſign our Satisfaction?

The more Any partake of the Divine Image, we find that they groan and long the more earneſtly, after another ſort of Happineſs, than is *here* to be had; after another State, and Life than *now* they enjoy. And may we not conclude, that *ſuch a State there is*? The natural Deſire of Happineſs in all Mankind, will do much to prove, that there is ſuch a Thing: But the holy Deſires of the Sanctified, influenced by the Spirit of Grace, will much more prove it. That Spirit of Chriſt, that hath enabled thee to long and pray for a more perfect State, that has conquered thy vain Deſires after Earthly Things, and raiſed them to ſeek the Knowledge, and Love, and Fruition of God; That Spirit is *the Witneſs of Chriſt in thy Soul*, that there is ſuch a State after Death, and that thou ſhalt ſhare in the Bleſſedneſs of it. He hath framed, and wrought, and fitted, and made thee meet for it. Theſe Deſires, it is true, are but faint and weak, to what the promiſed Salvation may juſtly challenge; yet they are Holy and Sincere, and have God, and Chriſt, and his Bleſſed Preſence above, for their Object; Thou haſt his Image and Seal, imprinted on thy Nature, Mind and Will. This Evidence, and Experience in thy ſelf, ſhall not be defeated in its Tendency and Deſign.

*Secondly*, In our Contemplation of this happy State, which the Saints deſire, beyond the Grave, we ought to Remember, that tho' the Glorious Change of the *Body* be *one part*, the Felicity of the *Soul* is the *principal one.* Yea, the Glory of Departed Souls, is one great Cauſe and Means of that happy Change, which we expect for the Body. To be with Chriſt, and behold his Glory, and partake of it, does eſpecially refer to the Soul. We ſhall *ſee him as he is*, and in that reſpect be made like him. We are now the Children of God by free Grace, and Adoption; but his admirable Love will not deſiſt, till our Conformity to his Image be more compleat; till we are brought to his Preſence, and partake of his Holineſs to that degree, as to be the Objects of his Eternal Complaiſance and Delight. *Father, I will*, ſays Chriſt, *that thoſe that thou haſt given me, ſhould be with me to behold my Glory.*

*Then* all our Sins and Failings, all our Follies and Infirmities, all our Wrinkles and Blemiſhes, all our Tranſgreſſions and Imperfections, ſhall be done away; and our Souls ſhall be waſhed white in the Blood of the Lamb, being conformed to our Divine Pattern.

The leſſer Manifeſtations of the Spiritual Glory of Chriſt, which we have ſometimes here, are highly valuable to a Saint, but unſpeakably ſhort of that which we expect. Theſe hereafter will be more *Clear*, and *Transforming*, more *Satisfactory*,

*Satisfactory*, and more *Laſting* : We now ſee through a Glaſs, but darkly ; but we ſhall know as we are known, for we ſhall ſee him *as he is*. We hope for an Enlightned, and Enlarged Mind, to behold the Excellency and Radiancy of the Divine Perfections, ſhining in and through our Glorified Redeemer. This will oblige the moſt Improved Saint that ever left this Earth, to cry out with the Queen of *Sheba* concerning *Solomon*, that *the one half was never told them*, was not known,or believed before. And if we are changed into his Image, by beholding his Glory in the Goſpel-glaſs, the Viſion hereafter will be more clear: and ſo the Change will be greater, and the Delight and Complacence reſulting from it, muſt needs be unſpeakably more. And this is our Comfort, that it will be ſuch, as ſhall laſt *for ever*. If we have any Glimpſe of him at preſent by the Light of Faith, we quickly loſe the ſight again : How ſoon does an interpoſing Cloud hide him from us? But the Felicity of the Bleſſed Viſion above will be *permanent*: We ſhall dwell for ever in the Joyful Light of his Countenance, and Abide with him continually in the Heavenly Manſions.

*Thirdly*, Let us then indeavour to *Confirm our Faith*, in the Expectation of this bleſſed State, for Soul and Body after Death. Let us keep the Grounds of Faith viſible in our Eye; let us Employ our Thoughts frequently, and ſeriouſly upon the bleſſed Object: Let us deeply and often conſider the cogent Reaſons, upon which we believe, and expect ſuch Things: both the Intrinſick Grounds of Faith, and the Motives of Credibility; That our Aſſent may be the more firm and laſting; That our Chriſtian Faith may influence us, as Preſent Things are wont to do.

Did we not look upon the Great Things of *the other Life* as *Uncertain*, we could not but reckon them preferable, to the beſt of our preſent Enjoyments. Did we believe them, we could not but deſire them. We have little to ſay for our not deſiring that bleſſed State, but our *Criminal Infidelity*, that we believe it not: For were we but fully perſwaded of the Truth of the Promiſes, we muſt needs Embrace them, for their Goodneſs, and Excellency. And then we ſhould long, till Death did draw aſide the Vail, open the Gate of Heaven, and bring us into the Divine Preſence. But we waver and doubt concerning the

Inviſible, Future World; and hence it is that we cloſe with what is *Preſent*, becauſe we are not equally perſwaded, of the Truth and Certainty of what is *Future*. Let us then Endeavour to ſtrengthen and confirm our Faith.

*Fourthly*, Let us regulate *our Affections and Carriage* in this Earthly Tabernacle, as Perſons who believe and expect ſuch a glorious Change. Let us paſs the time of our Sojourning in this World, as *Pilgrims and Strangers*. Let us abſtain from fleſhly Luſts that War againſt our Souls. Let us uſe both our Souls and Bodies anſwerable to the Belief of ſuch things. Let us watch leſt we are ſupriz'd into Sin, by our Bodily Senſes, Appetites, and Imaginations. Let us remember that the Soul and Body, like two diſeaſed Creatures bound together in one Chain, do now mutually Infect, Corrupt, and Poyſon one another. Let us take heed of Sin by the Inordinate Love of *Bodily Pleaſure*, or the Undue Fear of *Bodily Suffering*.

Let us imitate the Pattern of Chriſt while he dwelt in a Body, and labour to have the ſame Mind which he had, to be in this World as he was in it. Let the Good and Evil of this World have leſs powerful Impreſſion upon us. Let us not be over-fond of the Pleaſures of the Animal Life. May they every day be leſs conſiderable with us! Let us not ſo love the *Body*, as on that account to decline any *preſent Duty*; much leſs ſo over-love it, as to prefer the Comforts of the preſent Life, to a future Felicity.

Let us not regret over-much that ſuch an Earthly Tabernacle muſt fall into Duſt; that ſuch a periſhing Body muſt diſſolve, and lie in the Grave. We are ſenſible, how weak and uſeleſs it was for a good while at firſt, before the *Body* was fitted for the Service of the *Soul*; and we cannot but be ſenſible, what a Trouble and Temptation it has been ſince: Let the Burdens and Inconveniences of the Bodily Life be more tolerable. Let us not be Impatient under them. Let us be willing that the outward Man decay, ſo that the inward Man be renewed. Let our Judgment and Eſteem, our Deſires and Endeavours, our Joys and Sorrows, be rectified and moderated, as to all that refers to the *Body*, and this *Preſent Life*. Let our Eyes and Hearts be fixed on the Heavenly State, let us remember we are a ſort of Creatures related to the other World, tho' we dwell at preſent in an Earthly Tabernacle.

In the midſt of our Earthly Comforts, let us think of the Heavenly State and Life as infinitely better. Let us keep alive the Deſires of the Preſence of Chriſt, and fuller Conformity to him, in the height of our Temporal Proſperity. Let the believing Thoughts of the Celeſtial State be unſpeakably Sweeter to us, than the beſt of all this World, when it is moſt pleaſant, commodious, and inviting. Our Spirits are Diſtempered, and out of Order, *if it be not thus with us.*

And let all the Calamities and Afflictions of this preſent Life, be ſupported by this Expectation; and improved likewiſe to Strengthen, and Encreaſe ſuch Deſires of a better State. This is one deſign of God in our Temporal Croſſes, to aſſiſt our Victory over this World, and make us more intenſly, and earneſtly to aſpire after Heaven; to teach us to long for Everlaſting Reſt, and Peace, and Glory; to bring us practically to reckon, and conclude, that the Expected Glory that is to be revealed in us, will infinitely out-ballance all the Sufferings of our preſent State.

*In ſhort*, If you believe and expect ſuch a bleſſed Change, let the Apoſtle's Exhortation take place, to *be ſtedfaſt, unmove-*

*moveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for you know it cannot be in vain in the Lord.* Do not regret the Thoughts of Labouring and Suffering, for a little while more and longer in this Body. You need not apprehend you ſhall be Loſers, or fear to have a hard Bargain: For your preſent Sorrows, and Sufferings, and difficult Services, can laſt but a little while, and ſhall have an Eternal Recompence. If we are never ſo Abundant in the Work of the Lord, if we begin never ſo ſoon, and laſt never ſo long, *it ſhall not be in vain in the Lord;* If therefore you thus Believe and Expect, be perſwaded to give all Diligence, adding to your Faith Vertue, to Vertue Knowledge, to Knowledge Temperance, to Temperance Patience, to Patience Godlineſs, to Godlineſs Brotherly-kindneſs, to Brotherly-kindneſs Charity, being filled with all the Fruits of Righteouſneſs that are by Chriſt Jeſus to the Glory and Praiſe of God, that an Entrance may be adminiſtred to you Abundantly, into the Everlaſting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. Let us follow after, that we may apprehend that, for which alſo we are apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus. Let us reach forth unto thoſe things that are before, forgetting thoſe which are behind, and preſs towards the Mark of the Prize of the high Calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus; that if by any means we might attain unto the Reſurrection of the Dead. Phil. 3.11, 12,13. Let us remember we are to be but a little while in this Body, and this Earthly Houſe is appointed for Labour, it is a Work-houſe. *Let us* therefore *give all Diligence to work out our Salvation*, as knowing we ſhall not be long in the Body. This is the Apoſtles Argument as to himſelf, (and equally concerns us) 2 *Pet.* 1. 12, 13.

*Fifthly*, How ſollicitous ſhould we be to find in our ſelves *the Characters* of ſuch to whom theſe Deſires are ſuitable, and to clear up *our Title* to that Bleſſed State, which the Followers of Chriſt do thus earneſtly long for? The Promiſe of the Heavenly Inheritance is annexed to our being *Born of God*, or being born *from above*; You muſt therefore look after the Renovation of the Divine Image and Life, by the Spirit of Life and Power in Jeſus Chriſt. That the Holy Spirit may Witneſs with your Spirits to his own Work; that you may diſcover and diſcern thoſe holy Affections, as the Fruits of the Spirit, which are proper to the Children of God. Such, as an humble Fear of him, and diligent Care to pleaſe him; a fervent Love to God and Chriſt, an intire Reſignation to his Will; Holy Zeal for his Intereſt and Glory, and truſt in his Word, &c. For, till your Natures are changed by the Spirit of Chriſt, and you are ſo made meet for the Heavenly Inheritance, you cannot have a ſhare in this Bleſſedneſs, no more than if the Legal Bar be not removed by the Forgiveneſs of Sin, or your Perſons not reconciled by the Blood of Chriſt.

The Qualification of the Heirs of this great Salvation, is variouſly deſcribed in Scripture. Sometime by *Faith*, ſometimes by *Regeneration*, ſometimes by *Heavenly Affections*, ſometimes by *Holy Obedience*, and *Fruitfulneſs in Good Works*: All muſt concur to Suit us, and to Intitle us to the Heavenly State.

You are therefore to Enquire after *the Characters of the Children of God*, and the Heirs of Heaven, which is a ſtate of Sinleſs Perfection. And therefore to Examine; *Whether* you are brought to loath your ſelves for your Sins, and that there is no Sin but you would deſire to know, and are as deſirous to be rid of; and would rather be freed from Sin, than from Affliction? *Whether* you do not aſpire after the higheſt Degrees of Holineſs? *Whether* you would not rather be perfect in the Love of God, and the Obedience of his Will, than have all the Riches and Pleaſures of the World? *Whether* you do not like, and love that Degree of Holineſs in Others, that you have not yet attained your ſelves? *Whether* you do not love the Image of God and Chriſt, whereſoever you can diſcern it? *Whether* you do not endeavour to *Mortifie the Fleſh*, not to live or walk after it, and to be Crucified *to the World*, and with your chiefeſt Care and Endeavour, to ſerve and pleaſe God, and enjoy him for ever; *Depending on Jeſus Chriſt*, his Sacrifice, and Interceſſion, and Spirit, for all your Grace and Glory; all your Hopes of Acceptance with God, and Capacity, or Title for Communion with him; Giving up your ſelves intirely to be governed by *Him*; Being willing to obey his Law, whatſoever it ſhall coſt you; Watching over your Heart, Affections, and Thoughts, as well as outward Actions; Taking Pleaſure in the Worſhip and Service of God, as a delightful Work; Reſigning to God, and being devoted to his Will; Praying frequently for his Grace; and caſting your ſelves on his Mercy, through Jeſus Chriſt for Eternal Life.

Theſe are ſome of the *Characters* of ſuch, as are *Heirs of Salvation.* Theſe you muſt look after; and then Endeavour to advance, in a joyful Hope and Aſſurance, that the Heavenly Inheritance *is yours*; labouring for a ſettled Conſcience, growing in Grace, and eſpecially in Mortified Affections to the World; and living in the Exerciſe of Grace, by careful Obedience to God, as thoſe that are abſolutely devoted to him, and hope to live in his bleſſed Preſence for ever.

*Sixthly*, Let us be Aſhamed that we find in our ſelves no more of *this Holy Frame*. That we ſo love this Earthly Houſe, and are afraid of Death; *That our Deſires are ſo faint toward this Bleſſed Change.* How ſhameful is our Backwardneſs and Unwillingneſs to depart, and be with Chriſt! And how faulty are the Cauſes of it! which, in * another Diſcourſe I have open'd. How is it, that ſo few can ſay with the Apoſtle, *I deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better.*

**The Saints deſire to be with Chriſt*, Part 1. Serm. 1.

Have we not Experienced *enough* of the Vanity and Vexation of this World, to make us willing of a better Abode? Have we not ſinned and ſuffered *enough* not aſpire after the higheſt Degrees of Holineſs? *Whether* you would not rather be perfect in the Love of God, and the Obedience of his Will, than have all the Riches and Pleaſures of the World? *Whether* you do not like, and love that Degree of Holineſs in Others, that you have not yet attained your ſelves? *Whether* you do not love the Image of God and Chriſt, whereſoever you can diſcern it? *Whether* you do not endeavour to *Mortifie the Fleſh*, not to live or walk after it, and to be Crucified *to the World*, and with your chiefeſt Care and Endeavour, to ſerve and pleaſe God, and enjoy him for ever; *Depending on Jeſus Chriſt*, his Sacrifice, and Interceſſion, and Spirit, for all your Grace and Glory; all your Hopes of Acceptance with God, and Capacity, or Title for Communion with him; Giving up your ſelves intirely to be governed by *Him*; Being willing to obey his Law, whatſoever it ſhall coſt you; Watching over your Heart, Affections, and Thoughts, as well as outward Actions; Taking Pleaſure in the Worſhip and Service of God, as a delightful Work; Reſigning to God, and being devoted to his Will; Praying frequently for his Grace; and caſting your ſelves on his Mercy, through Jeſus Chriſt for Eternal Life.

Theſe are ſome of the *Characters* of ſuch, as are *Heirs of Salvation*. Theſe you muſt look after; and then Endeavour to advance, in a joyful Hope and Aſſurance, that the Heavenly Inheritance *is yours*; labouring for a ſettled Conſcience, growing in Grace, and eſpecially in Mortified Affections to the World; and living in the Exerciſe of Grace, by careful Obedience to God, as thoſe that are abſolutely devoted to him, and hope to live in his bleſſed Preſence for ever.

*Sixthly*, Let us be Aſhamed that we find in our ſelves no more of *this Holy Frame*. That we ſo love this Earthly Houſe, and are afraid of Death; *That our Deſires are ſo faint toward this Bleſſed Change*. How ſhameful is our Backwardneſs and Unwillingneſs to depart, and be with Chriſt! And how faulty are the Cauſes of it! which, in * another Diſcourſe I have open'd. How is it, that ſo few can ſay with the Apoſtle, *I deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better.*

* *The Saints deſire to be with Chriſt*, Part 1. Serm. 1.

Have we not Experienced *enough* of the Vanity and Vexation of this World, to make us willing of a better Abode? Have we not ſinned and ſuffered *enough* in this Body, to deſire to be uncloathed? at leaſt to wait patiently the Pleaſure of God for our Removal? And ſo glorious is the Change, which Chriſtians expect, that one would think there ſhould rather be need of *Patience*, to make a Believer wait till then. But whatever the Exerciſe of this Patience, under preſent Burdens may be, we need not doubt but one hours Enjoyment, will make amends for all our Waiting and Preparing.

It cannot be long with the *Youngeſt* of us. Let us not put it at a great Diſtance. It will quench the Coal of Heavenly Deſire, if we look upon Heaven as *Twenty* or *Thirty* Years off. We know not how ſoon God may call us; But have great Reaſon to lament the Strangeneſs of our Thoughts to the Heavenly State, and the faintneſs of our Deſires, when the Promiſed Felicity is ſo Attractive! Do we think we ſhall live ever the longer for being unwilling to Dye? Can it enter into our Thoughts, that our Exceſſive Love of the Body will procure our Continuance in it?

Is it poſſible we ſhould imagine, that Sincerity of Love to Chriſt is conſiſtent with ſuch Backwardneſs to go to him, and live with him? Why then do we not aſpire more earneſtly after this glorious Change? How is it that we groan under the Burdens of this Earthly Tabernacle, and yet are loth to be delivered?

Will a Sick Man be afraid of his Recovery? Or, a Priſoner tremble at the News of a Goal-delivery? No more ſhould a real Chriſtian be afraid of Death, or unwilling of it: For, conſidering the Death, and Reſurrection, and Aſcenſion, and *Promiſe* of Chriſt; it is to a Believer a quick Paſſage from Sickneſs to Eternal Health, from Toil and Labour, Captivity, and Sorrow, to everlaſting Reſt, and Liberty, and Joy.

I think (ſays * Mr. *B.*) God has purpoſely cloathed your Soul with ſo poor a Dreſs, that you ſhould be the leſs unwilling to be uncloathed; and might learn to ſet more by your Souls, than by your Bodies, and make more careful Proviſion for them. It ſeems he has purpoſely lodged you in ſo poor a Cottage, that you ſhould not be at too much Care for it, nor be too loth to leave it. You have its daily Neceſſities, Infirmities, and Pains, and ſomewhat of its Filth and Loathſomneſs, to tell you of its Meanneſs: And why ſhould you be ſo un-

* *Of Self-denial*, p. 202.

unwilling, that ſo frail a Body ſhould be turned to Duſt? Duſt it is, and to Duſt it is Sentenced. When the Soul has left it but a Week, Men can ſcarce indure to ſee it, or ſmell it; And ſhould the breaking of ſuch an Earthen Veſſel be ſo unpleaſant a thing to you?

And, for its *Uſefulneſs*, though, ſo far as it is obedient, it was ſerviceable to your Souls and to God; Yet was it ſo refractory, ill-diſpoſed, and diſobedient, that it proved no better than *your Enemy*. Many a Temptation it hath entertained and cheriſhed, and many a Sin hath it drawn you to commit. Your Senſes have let in a World of Vanity, your Wandering Eyes have called in Covetouſneſs, and Pride, and Luſt. Your Greedy Appetites have been ſo eager on the Bait, that they have too often born down your Faith and Reaſon, and drawn you to Exceſs in Meats or Drinks, for Matter or Manner, for Quality, or Quantity, or both. Many a Groan theſe Sins have coſt you, and a ſad uncomfortable Life you have had by reaſon of them, in compariſon of what you might have had; and this Fleſh has been the Mother, or the Nurſe of all.

You were engaged, by your *Baptiſmal Cove-*

*Covenant*, to Fight againſt it, when you entered into the Church; and, if you are *Chriſtians*, this Combate has been your daily Work, and much of the Buſineſs of your Lives; And yet are you loth to have the Victory, and ſee your Enemy under your feet? Have you fought your ſelves into Friendſhip with it, that you are ſo tender of it? Do you not know, that when you are the greateſt Friends to the Body, it will be the moſt dangerous Enemy to you? Do not think that it is only *Sin*, and not *the Body*, that is the *Fleſh*, which the Scripture calls your Enemy: For it is *the Body*, as inclining to Creatures, from which the ſinful Soul cannot reſtrain it; It is *the Body*, as having an inordinate, ſenſitive Appetite, and Imagination, and ſo diſtempered, as that it rebels againſt the Spirit, and caſteth off the Rule of Reaſon, and would not be curbed of its Deſires, but have the Rule of all it ſelf. Was it not the very *Fleſh* it ſelf that *S. Paul* ſays he fought againſt, and kept under, and brought into Subjection, *leſt he ſhould be a Caſtaway?* 1 Cor. 9. 26. Why ſhould *Sin* be called *Fleſh* and *Body*, but that it is the Body, or Fleſh, that is the principal Seat of thoſe Sins, that are ſo called? *&c.*

How earneſtly ſhould we beg of God,

that Faith and Hope in Vigorous Exerciſe, that may kindle our Deſires, and Love towards the Heavenly State, and make us long to behold the Lord in Glory? when we ſhall put off this Body, and our Souls be filled with Heavenly Light and Love. Certainly, if we do not now deſire it, we ſhall never enjoy it: For, we can never be happy by full Satisfaction, in that which we do not know enough of, to make us deſire. But the little Knowledge and Love of God, which a real Chriſtian now hath, ſhould make him Importunate in his Requeſts for more, and make him value his Hopes of a better State, beyond all the Pleaſures of Sin, and all the Poſſeſſions of this World.

O how paſſionately have ſome Excellent Perſons lamented the Weakneſs of their Deſires, and Love, and cryed out for more of Heavenly Life, and Light, and Love to God! *O* * *where is the longing, the rejoycing, the triumphing* Faith? *Where is the pleaſant* Familiarity *above, that ſhould make a Thought of Chriſt and Heaven to be ſweeter to me, than the Thought of Friends, and Health, or all the Pleaſure, and Proſperity in the World? Do thoſe that dwell in God, and God in them, and have their Heart and Converſation*

* Mr. B's *Dying Thoughts*, p. 184, 212

*ſation in Heaven, attain to no more clear, and ſatisfying Perception of that bleſſed State, than I have yet attained? Is there no more Acquaintance above, to be here expected? No livelier ſenſe of future Joys? No ſweeter Fore-taſts? No fuller ſilencing of Doubts and Fears? Alas! How many Chriſtians are leſs afraid to go to a Priſon, than to their God; and had rather be Baniſhed to a Land of Strangers, than ſent to Heaven?* O Lord, *muſt I, that am called thy Child, and an Heir of Heaven, and a* Coheir with Chriſt, *have no more Acquaintance with my Glorified Lord, and no more Love to thee, who art my Portion, before I go hence and come to thee?——Muſt I go hence, ſo* like a Stranger, *to my home? O what do I beg for ſo frequently, and ſo earneſtly, for the ſake of my Redeemer, as the Spirit of Life and Conſolation, that may ſhew me the pleaſed Face of God, and unite all my Affections to my glorified Head, and draw up this dark and drowſie Soul, to love and long to be with thee?*

*O God forbid, that this ſinful Fleſh ſhould be more powerful to draw me downwards, than Faith, and Hope, and Love, to carry my Deſires up to God. O thou that freely gaveſt me thy Grace, maintain it to the laſt againſt its Enemies,* *and make it finally Victorious: It came from thee, it hath been preſerved by thee, it is on thy ſide, and wholly for thee; O let it not now fail, and be conquer'd by blind and baſe Carnality, or by the Temptations of a Helliſh conquered Enemy! ——It is thine Image which thou loveſt, it is a Divine Nature, and Heavenly Beam; What will a Soul be without it, but a Dungeon of Darkneſs, a Devil for Malignity, and dead to Holineſs and Heavenlineſs? —— O rather deny me the Light of the Sun, than the Light of thy Countenance: Leſs miſerable had I been without Light or Being, than without thy Grace.*——

*O forſake not a Sinner in his Extremity, who Conſents to thy Covenant, and would not forſake thee.* My God, *I have often ſinned againſt thee, but yet thou knoweſt,* I would fain be Thine. *I have not ſerved thee with that Reſolution, Fidelity, and Delight, as ſuch a Maſter ſhould have been ſerved; But yet I would not forſake thy Service, nor change my Maſter, or my Work. I can ſay with thy Servant* Paul, *Acts* 27. 23. *That* thou art the God whoſe I am, and whom I ſerve. *And O! that I could ſerve thee better! For to ſerve thee, is but to receive thy Grace, and uſe it for my own, and others good; and*

*and ſo to glorifie thee, and pleaſe thy Will, which being Love it ſelf, it pleaſed beſt, when we receive it, and do moſt good.—— Nothing in this World is more my Grief, than that I love thee no more: Forſake not then a Sinner, that would not forſake thee, that looks towards thee, that feels it, as his Trouble, to be ſo dark and ſtrange unto thee; that groaneth, and gaſpeth after thee: feeling, to his greateſt ſorrow, that while he is preſent in the Body, he is abſent from the Lord.* My Lord, *I have nothing to do in this World, but to ſeek, and ſerve thee.——O pardon all my Carnal Thoughts, and all my Unthankful Neglects of thy precious Grace and Love; and let the fuller Communications of thy Forfeited Grace, now tell me by Experience, that thou doſt forgive me.——When I have ſaid, Will the Lord caſt off for ever? And will he be favourable no more? My Conſcience has replyed, That* this is mine Infirmity. *I never wanted Comfort, becauſe thou ever wanttedſt Mercy; but becauſe I wanted Faith, and Fitneſs to receive it, and perceive it; But haſt thou not Mercy alſo to give me, even that Fitneſs, and that Faith?* My God, *All is of* Thee, *and through* Thee, *and all is to Thee: and when I have the Felicity, the Glory of All for ever will be*

Thine; *If I can live and dye in truſting in* Thee, *ſurely I ſhall not be confounded.*

And yet, miſtake me not. I ſay not that all are Graceleſs, that are *Afraid of Death.* For Nature deſires Life, even under Sufferings that are but tolerable, rather than dye. And this is from meer natural, neceſſary Inclination, which Free-will hath not full Power againſt. *Death*, as the Diſſolution of our Frame, as the Separation of Soul and Body cannot, for it ſelf, be loved. The putrifying of this Body in the Grave, the greatneſs of the Change of Death, the Darkneſs of our Minds, and the Weakneſs of our Grace, the remaining Senſe of Sin, with the dreadful Majeſty of that God before whom we muſt appear, joyned with our Natural Averſeneſs to Dye, may make us ſhrink and tremble: But the Faith of the Inviſible World, the Love of God and Chriſt, and a deſire to enjoy him, and pleaſe him, and be with him, ſhould do much to overcome theſe Fears, and make us willing.

Though ſome remaining *Fear* be conſiſtent with *Uprightneſs*, yet remember, that not to deſire and long for this Bleſſed State, though mix'd with a Fear of intervening Death, is highly Criminal and Faulty: For the Love of God and Chriſt, and earneſt Deſires to be like him, and to be with him, ſeems to be the better half of all Religion, 2 *Tim.* 4. 8. 2 *Tit.* 13. 2 *Pet.* 3. 12. Not to deſire this Bleſſed Change, is directly a Sin againſt the *Goſpel*, whereby we are *called to the obtaining of the Glory of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* 2 Theſſ.2. 12. Without ſuch Deſires, we comply not with the Deſign and Will of God, who *hath called us to his Eternal Glory by Chriſt Jeſus.* 1 Pet.1.12 For how can his Call be anſwered, without an Inclination of Heart to ſuch a State, and a Deſire after it?

For a real Member of Chriſt, and Heir of Heaven, to be *only Content* to ſee the Lord, to be *Content* to be for ever in his Bleſſed Preſence, and perfectly holy, and freed from Sin, is a very hard and harſh Expreſſion. Men are Covetous, Eager, and Ambitious after Earthly Good; And ſhall a Chriſtian's Deſire be leſs earneſt after the Heavenly Glory?

I grant, ſome remaining Fear of Death may conſiſt with Integrity; when it is not *God* and *Heaven* we are averſe to, but *Death* that ſtands in the way: Or when it is becauſe of *our Doubts* of God's Acceptance of us. For I queſtion not but moſt upright Chriſtians would rather dye than live, might they but ſtrongly Hope to be with Chriſt, and Enjoy the Divine Preſence. As others would be glad of Removal, might it be *without Dying*, becauſe they fear *the Pains* and *Terrors* of a dying Hour. Might they not be uncloathed, but cloathed upon, by an immediate Tranſlation, they care not how ſoon it were. For there be *Many* ſuch, who deſire the Second Coming of Chriſt unfeignedly, and the Bleſſed Conſequences of it, to whom all the parts of the Heavenly State and Life are ſweet and grateful, who live and walk in their Integrity before God, tho' their Grace prevail not againſt *the Fear of Death*, in any great degree.

Whereas you ought to conſider, that the Throws and Pangs of *Travelling Women*, in ordinary Caſes, may be ſuppoſed to equal, or exceed the Pains of *Death*. And who knows the Divine Supports, that may make our Diſſolution eaſie? Yet many a Mother has Courage and Patience, by the Hopes of Life, and of a living Child, when all theſe Sorrows ſhall be ſoon forgotten.

And ſhall the Knowledge and Expectation of *Heaven*, and *Eternal Life* be leſs powerful, to influence thy Soul againſt the Fear of Death? How many have been inabled to conquer the Fear of Death, and been diſpleaſed with their Friends, that talked of their Recovery as hopeful, and have told them, that ſuch Diſcourſe was not pleaſing, they had rather dye, and be with Chriſt.

Is it *thy Uſefulneſs to Relations* and *Friends*, or to *the Intereſt of Chriſt in this World*, that makes thee unwilling? Think a little, Are you fitter to Judge and Determine of that than he? Can he not do his own Work without thee? You know you cannot have an Houſe above, without pulling down this Earthly Tabernacle; You know you cannot get to Heaven but by dying, and you pretend to be related to the Heavenly Country: Are you deſirous of nothing better than the Fruits of this Earth? What a Contempt of God and Chriſt, What a gratification of the Devil, what a Contradiction to your Belief and Hope, does this Backwardneſs carry with it? yea a Contradiction to the very End and Deſign of *all Religion*; which is a dead, and vain, inſignificant, and trifling Thing, if it refer not to *a Bleſſed Eternity* beyond the

Grave, and bring us not to deſire, and chuſe it as *our End.*

You eſpecially who are *Old Diſciples*, and have been long in the School of Chriſt, ſhould conſider this. You know you muſt er'e long lay down this Tabernacle and be uncloathed; You profeſs to hope, ſhortly to enter into the World of Joy; What a ſhame is it, that your Sight is no clearer, your Perception no quicker, your Apprehenſions no higher, your Deſires no ſtronger, as to this Expected Bleſſedneſs after Death! Tho' You are ſenſible you draw nearer to the Things Believed, and Hoped for, and that within a little while you expect the Promiſes will have a full Performance as to *You*; that you are almoſt *There*, where Faith ſhall paſs into Sight and Love; You are almoſt ready to take your place in *Glory*, where Millions are gone before you. O how is it, that you are no more joyfully affected with theſe Hopes! How is it, that your Thoughts are ſo doubtful, your Deſires ſo ſluggiſh? That this Body, and this preſent World, is ſo unduly loved? even tho' the Pleaſure of ſenſible Things be almoſt gone; tho' Bodily Infirmities and Pains, make this preſent Dwelling uneaſie: For they require your Patience, and call aloud to you to haſten your Work, to ſet looſe, and prepare to come away. God hath made you weary of this World, and makes you often cry for Divine Aſſiſtance and Grace: He hath given you to know by Experience, that He alone muſt be the Portion of your Souls, his Favour alone your Life, and Heaven, or Nothing, your Happineſs: You find that the Hope of Heaven is your only Comfort: For ſuch as *You*, to be unwilling to dye, who, by Age and Weakneſs, have one Foot in Heaven already, is moſt inexcuſable.

You have found that your Souls are uſually worſt, when your Bodies have been beſt, and when the Body is in the beſt State, it is uſually worſt with the Soul: Should it not therefore be your Care, when the outward Man is decaying, that the inward Man ſhould be aſpiring after God, and grow better? Has this vile and corruptible Fleſh been ſo much your Friend, that you are loth to be uncloathed? What Entertainment have you had in this World, that you ſhould be ſo loth to leave it? Have your Fears, and Cares, and Sorrows, by reaſon of *the Body*, been ſo delightful, that you would not that they ſhould have an End, that you do not groan to be cloathed upon, with an Houſe from Heaven? Methinks, as every Pain and Ache, and Trouble, and Sickneſs, ſhould mind the Wicked of their Eternal Sorrows; ſo the Bodily Infirmities, Decays, and Sickneſs of good Men, ſhould raiſe their Deſire to be with Chriſt.

O what a ſhame is it, as to All of us, that we no more deſire and groan to be delivered, when there is ſo glorious and bleſſed a State in view before us? That the Thoughts of theſe things are ſo cold and ſeldom! Our heavenly Affections ſo low and weak! What can be the reaſon? but that we look upon the heavenly Glory as at the diſtance of many Years to come, if at all we believe and expect it? But this is *Shameful*, to thoſe that profeſs by Death to expect a Freedom from all the Incumberances of Fleſh and Blood, of bodily Paſſions and Appetites, and of all the preſent Temptations of Senſuality: who expect that our Time of Sinning and Suffering ſhall ſhortly end together, when we ſhall be releaſed from all the ſad Accidents of Mortality, and this vile and corruptible Body be raiſed in Glory. *Shameful* indeed for us, who believe a Bleſſed State ſo near; when there ſhall be nothing from *within*, nor from *without*, ever more to intercept, hinder, or abate our Compleat Felicity: who look for the Light of God's Eternal Favour to ſhine upon us, and the plentiful, pleaſant Streams of Eternal Goodneſs, flowing from God and the Lamb, to make our Delight, and Joy Perfect and Everlaſting. And yet we do not, (as we ought,) deſire and long to be Partakers of this Bleſſed State.

*Laſtly*, This ſhould moderate our Sorrow, for the Death of our holy Friends and Relations; whoſe Earthly Houſe is pulled down, to enjoy a Heavenly one. Who groaned, and waited, and longed, for that Diſſolution, which we unduly Mourn for. Who are pleaſed with that Tranſlation, and Removal, which we bewail. It is but what they deſired, and long have waited for. They are now pleaſed, in the Happy Change of their old Earthly Dwelling, for a Building of God, not made with Hands, Eternal in the Heavens. They are uncloathed to be cloathed upon. Let us not then Mourn for their Advancement to that Happy State, which they earneſtly aſpired after; and which we our ſelves ſhould live in the Joyful Expectation of. Let us rejoyce rather, that they have finiſhed their Courſe; that their Souls are gone to Chriſt; That their Bodies ſhall reſt in their Graves, for a Time, and hereafter ariſe in Glory. Let us think where our deceaſed Holy Friends now are, what they ſee, and know, and do, and enjoy: what the State, and Life, and Company, and Employment above is: And how much better it is with them now, than when they were with us on Earth. They have received *the end of their Faith and Hope*, and ſo attained their Deſire in the preſent *Salvation of their Souls*; and they have Aſſurance too as to their Bodies, That hereafter they ſhall be raiſed, and changed, and made like the glorious Body of Chriſt.

Let us thus think in particular of our Good Friend Mrs. *Mary Doolittle*, who hath put off this Earthly Tabernacle, and is entered into the glorious Aſſembly of the Friends of Chriſt above. What I ſhall mention of Her, is from ſuch Hands, as there can be no doubt of the *Truth*, of what I ſhall ſay; and very many of You here, will readily yield a concurrent Teſtimony.

It ſhall be under Three Heads, *Firſt*, Her Perſonal Piety, or her general Character as a Chriſtian. *Secondly*, Her Relative-Religion, or concerning her in the ſeveral Relations, wherein ſhe ſtood, as faithfully diſcharging the Duties of them. *Thirdly*, Her Chriſtian Deportment under bodily Infirmities and Sickneſs, with *ſome more Remarkable Paſſages in her laſt Sickneſs*, before ſhe put off this Earthly Tabernacle.

*Firſt*, As to her *Perſonal Piety*, and General Character as a *Chriſtian*, That ſhe was truly Serious, and Religious *in her Youth*, and ſo eſteemed and judged above Forty years ago, was the ground of her being choſen by her Husband, as the Companion of his Life. And God continued her to him in much Mercy, for about *Nine and thirty years*: Being pleaſed by Her to build up his Houſe, to ſuch a Degree, as not many Inſtances in City or Country can be given of the like. That out of his own Family, there was not one Solemn Funeral in *Thirty nine* or *Forty years*; except of Two Children in the Month; and One newly wean'd; and none at all in the Space of *Five and twenty* years. Let God have the Glory, and let Thankfulneſs to Heaven be mixed with your Mourning, by this Reflection.

I do not underſtand, (and I like it not the worſe) that ſhe pretended to high Flights of Confidence and Aſſurance, which few attain, or preſerve very long: And I fear many deceive themſelves, by ſomewhat that is *not of God*, under that Name. Yet when ſhe had any Darkneſs as to her Spiritual State, when ſhe was ſenſible of the Weakneſs of her *Love to Chriſt*, and Lamented it; *He* who on all accounts was fitteſt to aſſiſt her, endeavoured to let her know the Truth of that Grace, by diſtinguiſhing of a threefold Love to Chriſt; *a Delighting Love*, *a Deſiring Love*, and *a Mourning Love:* Telling her, that tho' ſhe had not the *former* of theſe, to her Comfort; ſhe could not deny, or diſown *the two latter*. And this helped to give her Satisfaction, concerning the Trial of her State. She added Judiciouſly the Night before ſhe died, *I look to Sincerity, and Uprightneſs of Heart, as a ground of Comfort; but I do not put them in the room of Chriſt, my only Saviour.*

Several years ago ſhe read much in the Practical Writings of Mr. *Iſaac Ambroſe*, particularly concerning *Eternity*, which made a very great Impreſſion on her Mind, ſo as that ſhe trembled under the Apprehenſion, leſt ſhe ſhould come ſhort of that *Bleſſed Eternity*, there deſcribed. However, under her Doubts and Fears, when *the free Grace of God in Chriſt* was diſcourſed of, ſhe could comfortably ſay, *Why then may not ſuch a one as* I, *be accepted by free Grace in Chriſt? and hope to be capable of Bleſſedneſs in Heaven, as well as Others? This is a Faithful Saying, worthy of all Acceptation*, that *Chriſt came into the World to ſave Sinners, of whom I am Chief.* This ſhe did, and could ſay, from her very Soul, and this was her Encouragement and Joy, that ſhe could Say it, *I have Reſigned my ſelf to God in Covenant again and again. I Bleſs the Lord, who hath enabled me to devote, and give up my ſelf to be his. Lord? I am thine, Accept and Save me.* And at another Time ſhe was able to ſay, *I have had that Converſe with God, and Communion with him, that I would not part with for the whole World.* This is more than many, who are Sincere attain unto. For tho' ſome real

Chriſtians have great Refreſhments, and Support, by Communication of Light, and Strength, and Joy upon a Sick and Death Bed; as if the Light of Glory ſhined into them, and they had the beginning of Heaven here; Yet many others may want this, when they come to dye, and Experience little of theſe Exuberant Joys, through their whole Courſe. For God exerciſes *Prerogative* in the Diſpenſation of *his* Comforts, at that, and at other Times.

Therefore the Judgment we ſhould make of Perſons,muſt rather be grounded on *their general Courſe of Life*, than on their particular Frame in Sickneſs, or toward the Approach of Death. Some times by reaſon of the Diſorder of the Blood and Spirits, the Holieſt Servants of God may be either Lumpiſh and Melancholy; or elſe Feveriſh and Phrenetical: Sometimes through the Temptations of the Devil, they may be unſettled in their Minds; or through Deſertion ſpeak uncomfortably to thoſe about them. They may Afflict themſelves with deſpairing Thoughts, and leave the World under inward Darkneſs. Their Agonies in Death may be without any Sence of

Comfort, and yet they may be Accepted with God, and paſs to Eternal Glory. We ſhall not be Judged, according to that particular Inſtant of Death, but according to the general Courſe of our Life. However, it is obſerved *in moſt Caſes*, that God does ſpeak Peace to Upright Chriſtians, before he takes them to himſelf.

*Secondly*, Let us Conſider her Carriage in each *Relation*. There were many things Imitable in her Example, as a Wife, a Mother, a Miſtreſs, *&c.* Her *Affection* and *Reverence* to her *Husband*, were very obſervable. When he, among many other of the Faithful Servants of Chriſt was Silenced, and forbidden to Preach; tho' ſhe had then Children, and like to have more; and a conſiderable Maintenance was thereby to be ſtopped; and a growing Family to be caſt upon the Providence of God; and many urged Her, to perſwade him to comply with the Impoſed Terms: She wholly declin'd it, and would rather truſt God in a Suffering State; leaving him intirely to his Conſcience, as the fitteſt Judge of his Obligations, Truſt, and Duty, in that Caſe.

When afterwards, Conſequent to his Nonconformity, he met with any Difficulties, by continuing to Preach; ſhe patiently ſubmitted, and took joyfully the ſpoiling of their Goods; ſaying often, when his Perſon was in hazard, That ſhe was ready, rather to adventure *her own Life*, than that *His* ſhould be in danger: As apprehending His to be more valuable to the World, and the Intereſt of Souls, than hers, or Twenty ſuch.

*This Affection* ſhe continued all her Life, adviſing her Children in her laſt Sickneſs, to be careful of their Father, and tender of him *in her Abſence*: for by ſo mild, and good a word, ſhe ſpake of her *Diſſolution*, then in Proſpect. Adviſing them withal to love one another, and be kindly Affectioned to each other: Praying particularly for * *her Son*, whom ſhe had the Comfort to ſee ſetled in the Sacred Work of *the Miniſtry*, that God would furniſh him with ſuitable Strength of Body and Spirit, and crown his Miniſtry with an abundant Bleſſing.

* Mr. *Samuel Doolittle.*

Not long before ſhe dyed, ſhe thankfully owned the Goodneſs of God to her, in the Spiritual Aſſiſtance and Comfort, ſhe received by *ſuch Relations*, who had an Intereſt in Heaven, and could plead it for her in Prayer, while ſhe was languiſhing on a Sick Bed. And, at laſt, when ſhe took her Farewel of her Husband, *She thanked him for all his Love, and all his Prayers*, as audibly as ſhe was then able to ſpeak.

*Thirdly*, As to her Deportment under Bodily Weakneſs and Pains; Her Patience and Submiſſion were very becoming, and truly Chriſtian.

When ſhe could not ſleep in the Night, ſhe ſaid the next Morning, *I thought this would have been a Comfortable Night to me:* but preſently recollected her ſelf, ſaying, *So it is, for it is a Mercy I am out of Hell, when Ten thouſands are caſt into the Bottomleſs Pit, that never ſinned as I have done.*

How well ſhe bore *her Sickneſs*, and how little ſollicitous ſhe was about the Iſſue of it, is evident from her own words; *O how comfortable is Death, when Sin is Pardoned, and God Reconciled? O that I might entertain kind, and good Thoughts of God, and truſt him, though he ſlay me.* When ſpoken to, about her Recovery; She could ſay, *I do not hope it; and bleſſed be God I do not deſire it.* When asked, Are you not in a ſtreight about it? Are you willing to leave Husband, and Children, and all to be with Chriſt? She declared *her Willingneſs.*

It is true, ſometimes ſhe complained, That ſhe had not ſuch vigorous, lively, melting Affections, *in Sickneſs*, as ſometime formerly *in Health:* yet ſhe depended on God ſtill.

When ſhe was Asked, Whether ſhe kept her Thoughts employed about *Heaven?* She Anſwered, *I do what I can.* And the Night before ſhe dyed, after a little ſilence, when ſhe was queſtioned concerning her *Thoughts*, What ſhe was thinking of? She Anſwered, *Three things*, (which are fit for all of us often to think of) *a Deceitful Heart, a Painful Death, and a Tempting Devil:* God reſtrained the *laſt*, and carried her above the Fear, and Feeling of the *Second:* for tho' ſhe ſaid, *She feared a hard Death*; Yet ſhe added, *I ſubmit to the Will of God, he will not lay upon me more than he will enable me to bear.*

Her *Humility* and *Thankfulneſs* was very conſpicuous during this Sickneſs. O *what a Mercy is it*, ſaid ſhe, *that ſuch a one as I ſhould have Hopes of Heaven, of the Pardon of Sin, and of an Intereſt in Chriſt:* And yet when any of thoſe holy Expreſſions ſhe uſed, were repeated in Prayer to God, by thoſe who aſſiſted her, She deſired, no ſuch Speeches of hers ſhould be mentioned to God; *For*, ſays ſhe, *my frame is not equal, and alike alway. I cannot think, and ſpeak the ſame things, at one time, that I do at another.*

An hour or two before *She* left this World, ſhe teſtified her Deſire to be with Chriſt; ſaying, *How long! O Lord, how long! if my Work be done come and deliver me!* She begged they would pray for her, that her Strength might hold out to the laſt; that God would not leave her, nor hide his Face in the Agonies of Death. She deſired rather to be diſſolved, than to continue in the Body: ſaying, *I Look, I Long, I Hope; O when will the hour come? Muſt I tarry, and endure another Night! Come, Lord Jeſus, Come quickly! Haſt thou no Bowels for me? Whilſt thou wert on Earth, thou wert full of Compaſſion to poor Sinners, and art thou not the ſame in Heaven?* After this ſhe owned herſelf refreſhed by *Prayer*, and that tho' her Body was weak, her Heart was in a good Frame; being much recruited, and encouraged by Prayer. And ſo ſhe Commended her Soul to God, calling on him to the very laſt, for his merciful Aſſiſtance, and Succour, through the dark Valley, and to accept and receive her departing Soul; and ſo *ſhe dyed in the Lord*, and *ſlept in Jeſus.*

God grant to us, as he did to Her, Saving Help in that hour of Darkneſs and Trouble! and enable us to follow the Exemplary Faith and Patience, of thoſe who are gone before! That with them at laſt, we may receive *the End of our Faith and Hope, the Salvation of our Souls, and the Reſurrection of our Bodies, in the Day of Chriſt. To him be Glory for ever and ever.* Amen.

A

# A
# Funeral Sermon
PREACHED
Upon the **DEATH** of
the Reverend
**Mr. *Nathaniel Oldfield*:**
Who Deceaſed
*December* 31. 1696. *Ætat.* 32.
With ſome Account of his
Exemplary Character.

---

**The Second Edition.**

---

By *JOHN SHOWER.*

---

*LONDON:*
Printed for *Sam. Crouch*, at the Corner of
*Popes Head-Alley* in *Cornhill*; and *J. Lawrence*,
at the *Angel* in the *Poultry*, 1699.

# TO

## His Worthy Friend and Brother,

## Mr. *Joſhua Oldfield.*

SIR,

THE *Honour which it pleaſed God to beſtow on* Your Deceaſed Brother, *to be ſo much a Bleſſing, and Beloved, while Living, ought to qualifie your Sorrow for his Death; and make you the more ſoftly to lament your Loſs.*

*'Twas his* Serious Godlineſs, *that made him ſo valuable, and in ſome reſpect,* You *and* I *are more obliged than others, to* Follow his Faith, *or Christian Piety, (in* * *that ſenſe you know the word is ſometimes uſed.) The Integrity of his Heart towards God, joyn'd with a true Zeal for his Glory, qualified him for great Service as a Miniſter.*

* 2 Tim. i. 5. Chap. iv. 6.

*Will you ſuffer me to mind* my Self *and* You, (*who I am perſwaded, need it leſs than I do*) *that it was his ſolicitous Care and Concern about the Salvation of* his own Soul, *that made him ſo Diligent and Succeſsful for* the Souls of others. *He had very much Help herein, by the frequent and attentive Peruſal of the Cloſe Warnings, and Directions given Miniſters in* * The Reformed Paſtor, ‘*To take heed, leſt we be* Preachers *and* no Chriſtians, *dedicated to the Altar as God's Prieſts, and not ſanctified by Dedication to Chriſt as his Diſciples, and ſo worſhip* an unknown God, *and preach* an unknown Saviour, an unknown Spirit, *an unknown ſtate of Holineſs, and Communion with God, and a Glory that is* unknown, *and like to be* unknown for ever.—— *If we ſoundly believe, and are affected with the Truth we ſtudy and preach, we ſhall preach it more heartily.* Experience *will direct us to the fitteſt Subjects, and furniſh us with Matter, and*

* Mr. *B*'s *Gildas Salvianus*, The Reformed Paſtor, 8°. Ch. 1. §. 9. Ch. 5. §. 5, 6, 7, *&c.*

' *quicken us to ſet it home. Whereas*
' *he is like to be but an Heartleſs*
' *Preacher, who is a Stranger to that*
' *Chriſt, and Grace, he preacheth of*
' *to others. And ſo if he do not* firſt
' *preach to himſelf, what he teacheth*
' *them; for if our own* Hearts *be* cold,
' *our* Preaching *will be* ſo: *And if*
' *we have but an affected Fervency,*
' *we can't expect a Bleſſing ſhould attend it.*

*There are many Paſſages in that Book of the like Tendency, which we can hardly read without Fear and Trembling; ſome of'em, as I remember, He own'd did moſt deeply affect his Soul, and I have ſometimes thought they had ſome good Impreſſion on mine. I deſire to be more under the Awe and Influence of ſuch Conſiderations. It may be the Recital of a few more of'em, may be of uſe to ſome of the Younger Miniſters. As Face anſwers to Face in a Glaſs, ſo doth the Heart of Man one to another: What was of uſe to Him and Me, may reach more.*

‘*How many have preach'd Chriſt, and periſht for want of a Saving Intereſt in him? Many may be now in* Hell, *who have told their Hearers of the Torments of* Hell, *and warn'd them to avoid it. Who have preach'd of the Wrath of God againſt Sinners, and are now feeling of it. O what ſadder Caſe can there be in the World, than for a Man, whoſe Buſineſs and Calling it was to proclaim* Salvation, *and help others to obtain it, yet after all, himſelf to be ſhut out! That we ſhould have ſo many Books in our Libraries, that tell us the way to* Heaven, *that we ſhould ſpend ſo much time in reading thoſe Books, and ſtudying the Doctrine of Eternal Life, and after all to miſs of it! That we ſhould preach ſo many Sermons of Eternal Salvation, and yet fall ſhort of it: And this becauſe we preached of* Chriſt, *but neglected him; of the* Spirit, *but reſiſted him; of* Faith, *but did not heartily believe; of* Repentance *and* Converſion, *but continued in a ſtate of Sin; of* an

‘ Heavenly Heart and Life, *but re-*
‘ *mained Carnal and Earthly our ſelves.*
‘ *Do we not know, that* God is no
‘ Reſpecter of Perſons , *and that*
‘ *an Holy Calling will never ſave an*
‘ *Unholy Man? That the Preachers*
‘ *of the Goſpel, muſt be judged by the*
‘ *Goſpel; ſtand at the ſame Bar, be*
‘ *ſentenc'd on the ſame Terms, and*
‘ *dealt with as ſeverely as other Men?*
‘ ——*It is a fearful thing to be an*
‘ *unſanctified Profeſſor, but much more*
‘ *ſo to be* an Unholy Preacher. *When*
‘ *we open our Bibles, ſhould we not*
‘ *tremble, leſt we read our own Con-*
‘ *demnation? When we pen our Ser-*
‘ *mons, little do we think we are*
‘ *drawing up Indictments againſt our*
‘ *own Souls: When we are arguing a-*
‘ *gainſt Sin, that we are but aggrava-*
‘ *ting our own: When we magnifie the*
‘ *Riches of Chriſt, and his Grace, and*
‘ *declare it to others, we publiſh our own*
‘ *Iniquity in rejecting him, and our*
‘ *own Miſery in being Strangers to*
‘ *him.* O Miſerable Life! *that a*
‘ *Man ſhould ſtudy, and preach from*

‘ *year to year againſt himſelf, and*
‘ *ſpend his days in a Courſe of Self-*
‘ *condemning!——What aggrava-*
‘ *ted Miſery will it be, to periſh in the*
‘ *midſt of* Plenty, *to famiſh with the*
‘ *Bread of Life in our Hands, while*
‘ *we offer it to others, and urge them*
‘ *to receive it, but we our ſelves will*
‘ *not!*

*Next to His Piety, or as a part of it, his* Peaceableneſs *and* Charity, *in oppoſition to Bitterneſs, and Dividing Zeal, and a Narrow Spirit, was very Commendable and Exemplary. He could unite with all Chriſtians in Things Neceſſary, and was not for making more Fundamentals and Neceſſaries than Chriſt hath made; or for other Terms of Church-Communion, than the Terms of our Common Chriſtianity: And therefore was ready to receive All, whom he believed Chriſt would receive. He was of* one Church *with all thoſe, whom he hop'd to meet in Heaven. Endeavouring to hold the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace, becauſe he* *be acknowledged that there is but* One Body, one Spirit, one Lord Jeſus Chriſt, one Hope, one Faith, one Baptiſm, ( *and conſequently but one Holy Table,* ) one God and Father of all, *from whom, and by whom, and for whom are all Things.*

*'Tis from this Principle, as eſteeming the Piety, Learning, and Uſefulneſs of Men of all Perſwaſions, that I cannot be unaffected at the Death of the Reverend Dr.* Horneck, *of the* Savoy, *this Week: His Devotion,* Zeal *and Diligence in Preaching, Writing, and otherways endeavouring to do good to the Souls of Men, makes him to be deſervedly and generally lamented; tho' I had no particular Acquaintance with him, I reckon my ſelf bound to value and love every Man, who endeavours to promote Reformation, and Practical Religion, and ſpends his Time, as he did, to help to make the World better. I Rejoice in the* Gifts, *and* Graces, *and* Succeſs *of All the Servants of Chriſt, of whatever* Name *or* Denomination. *Yea,*

*I will Eſteem, and Love Them, whether they will Own, and Love me or no.*

*This Charitable Spirit, ( let who will call ſuch* Moderation *Lukewarmneſs,) with ſerious Diligence to pleaſe God, and do what Service we can in our Several Places, will be accepted with* God, *and yield us Comfort, living and dying. And will, I doubt not, be better thought of hereafter, when the little Names of Diſtinction and Matters of Diſpute, that now divide Chriſtians and Proteſtants, ſhall be forgotten. As to all the Opinions and Cenſures of Men, while we endeavour to do our Duty, we ought to be firmly perſwaded, that every Man's* Reputation *and* Credit, *is as much at the Diſpoſal of God, and under the Conduct of his Providence, as his* Eſtate, *or* Health, *or* Life; *and accordingly we ought to Truſt him.*

SIR, *By what I already know of You, I do not queſtion your Agreement with me in theſe things. I hope I ſhall* *know you better, by a nearer and more intimate Acquaintance, if it ſhall pleaſe God to Direct and Guide You, to comply with the Invitation you have (by a unanimous and ſpeedy Choice) to ſucceed your Brother. However that be, I beg of God to ſanctifie this Providence to you, to the Congregation, and to all his ſurviving Friends and Acquaintance: May I have Wiſdom, duly to improve it. I am*

SIR,

London,
Febr. 3, 169$\frac{6}{7}$.

*Your Affectionate*

*Brother and Servant,*

**John Shower.**

# A
# Funeral Sermon
## ON THE
## Death of Mr. *N. Oldfield.*

---

### HEB. XIII. 7.

*Remember them who have the Rule over you, who have ſpoken unto you the Word of God; whoſe Faith follow, conſidering the End of their Converſation.*

THE Suitableneſs of this Paſſage to the preſent Solemnity, and to the Mournful Occaſion of it, is ſufficiently apparent. The Direction here given, concerning the Peoples Duty, with reſpect to their Miniſters, is entire, and may be underſtood without examining the Context. One would think it very eaſie to determine, of what *Miniſters* the Apoſtle ſpeaks, whether ſuch as were yet *Alive*, or ſuch as were *Dead*; did not our Tranſlation favour their Opinion, who would make the Original Word a Participle, rather than a Subſtantive, (*τῶν ἡγουμένων*;) contrary to the more general Senſe of moſt Learned Interpreters and Criticks, who read the Words thus, *Be mindful of your Guides*, or *Rulers*, *and remember them who have had the Rule over you*; *i. e.* who have been, and were your Spiritual Guides. That 'tis of *theſe* he ſpeaks, is, manifeſt by what follows; *Who have ſpoken to you the Word of God*; or have been your Inſtructors in the Faith; and who have kept the Faith, and finiſhed their Courſe: For he adviſes them *to follow their Faith*, and to conſider the happy *End* and *Exit of their Converſation.*

As to the Duties unto *Deceaſed Miniſters* here mention'd, it cannot be denied, but they are applicable in part to other Good Men, departed this Life: For when private Chriſtians dye in the Lord, we are not to forget them, and are obliged to imitate their Faith and Patience; and to that end, to conſider their Converſation in *this* World, and how they got ſafe into *another*. But the Apoſtle ſpeaks here of their *Paſtors* and *Teachers*, the Miniſters of the Goſpel, and ſuch of their Spiritual Guides as were departed this Life. With reſpect to theſe, we have *two things* to conſider. *Firſt*, The Account that he gives of them, as to their *Perſons*. *Secondly*, The *Duty* of Surviving Chriſtians towards them, after their Death.

1. *Firſt*, As to their *Perſons*, the Apoſtle gives us an account of them in four Things. 1. As to their *Name*, They are Guides and *Rulers*, ἡγούμενοι 2. They have *ſpoken to you the Word of God*, have been *Preachers* of the Everlaſting Goſpel. 3. He teſtifies *their Exemplary Faith*, propoſing them as Patterns. 4. Their *Conſtancy* and *Perſeverance* in Faith and Holineſs to the laſt; *Conſidering the End of their Converſation*.

2. Having thus deſcribed their *Perſons*, he mentions *three Duties* towards them. 1. To *Remember them*. 2. To *Follow their Faith*. 3. As a Motive and a Means thereto, to *Conſider their Converſation*, and the happy *End* of it; *Remember*

*member them who have had*, &c. I ſhall firſt explain theſe ſeveral Particulars in the Text, in the order mentioned; and then Apply my Diſcourſe to the Solemn Occaſion of this Aſſembly, *viz.* the Breach which God hath made amongſt you, by the Death of *my Reverend and worthy Brother.*

1. *Firſt*, As to *the Perſons* here deſcribed: They are called *Rulers* and *Guides*, for ſo the Original Word imports; ſuch as have the Guidance and Inſtruction of others, by Authority or Office. It is ſometimes uſed for Civil Rulers, ſometimes for Eccleſiaſtical; and for the General of an Army, for the Captain of a Regiment, for the Governour of a Town, and ſometimes for a Principal Perſon amongſt others, *Acts* 15. 22.

The Sacred Writers make uſe of this Word, for ſuch as were eſtabliſhed to feed the Flock of Chriſt, and had the over-ſight of particular Churches; So *Ver.* 17. *Obey them that have the Rule over you, and ſubmit your ſelves; for they watch for your Souls, as they that muſt give an account.* The like *ver.* 24. *Salute all them that have the Rule over you, and all the Saints.* 'Tis doubted, whether St. *James*, who was Biſhop of *Jeruſalem*, was then alive; and more, whether the Apoſtle directs this Epiſtle to all the Churches in *Judea*, or only to the Converted *Jews* in *Jeruſalem*. I ſhall not go about to decide it. 'Tis plain, that theſe Rulers, theſe Watchmen are the ſame, who in the Text had ſpoken the Word of God, or preach'd the Goſpel.

To this purpoſe we find that *Clemens Romanus*, who is the moſt Ancient Writer of the Chriſtian Church, next the Apoſtles, (the ſame *Clemens* who is mentioned by the Apoſtle himſelf, *Phil.* 4.3.) in his Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, uſeth this very word very frequently for * Goſpel Miniſters, Biſhops, ſuch as preach'd the Word of God, and were over 'em in the Lord, and ſeveral of them in one Church, making uſe ſometimes of the one Name, ſometimes of the other.

Our Bleſſed Saviour is called the Head, the Husband, the Shepherd, the Lord of his Church, which imports *Authority*; and the Church is his Body, his Spouſe, his Flock, his Family and Houſhold; and his Miniſters are called *Rulers of his Houſhold*, *Matth.* 24. 45. When he was about to leave the World, he declared that

* ὑποτασσόμενοι τοῖς ἡγουμένοις ὑμῶν, *p.*2. προηγουμένους ὑμῶν, *p.* 30. ὑποτάγητε τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις, *Ib.p.*73. *St. Clemens Rom. Epiſt.* 1. *ad Corinth* 4°. *Edit. Patr. Junij Oxon.* 1633.

that all Power in Heaven and Earth was committed to him, and commiſſioned his Apoſtles to make Diſciples by Baptizing and Teaching, promiſing his Preſence with them therein, *to the End of the World:* And when he aſcended up on high, he gave Gifts to Men, as part of his Dowry, not only *Prophets*, and *Apoſtles*, and *Evangeliſts*, who were empowered by Miracles as a Divine Atteſtation, to prove their Authority, to reveal and publiſh the Rule of Faith and Life, but *Paſtors* and *Teachers*, to open and apply the Rule, which they ſealed and delivered.

He hath determined in his Word, that every Church ſhould have a *Paſtor*, one or more; he hath ſtated the Nature of the Miniſterial Office and Power, to proclaim Repentance and Remiſſion of Sins, to turn Men from the Power of Satan to God, to edifie the Body of Chriſt, and to gather, feed, and govern the Churches of Chriſt, to Rule as well as Teach the Flock, to judge who ſhould be publickly taken into the Church by Baptiſm, or caſt out; to rebuke thoſe that are diſorderly, and ſee that all things be done to the Edification of the Church, to bind over the Impenitent, who are *contumacious*, to the Bar of Chriſt, and reject 'em from the Communion of the Church, and to abſolve the Penitent, and comfort 'em, and by themſelves, or others, to look after the Poor, and viſit the Sick, &c. He hath deſcribed the Perſons that he would have to be ſuch Officers, by their requiſite Qualifications; he did not appoint a neceſſary Work to be done, and leave it to the wide World who ſhould do it: And that will help to determine, who are the individual Perſons, that are fitteſt according to Chriſt's Deſcription.

I diſpute not, Whether there hath not been, and ought not to be, a diſtinction of Powers and Perſons in Eccleſiaſtical Government, or whether an abſolute Equality muſt not neceſſarily be attended with very ill Conſequences; or whether Miniſters do not need Order, and Rule, and Government among themſelves, as well as every other Company and Society of Men in the World. But that which I argue from this Text, is this, That they who *preach* the Goſpel, are to *Guide*, *Overſee* and *Rule* their own Flock, according to the Holy Scripture.

They are the *Servants of Chriſt* in his Work, and *your Servants for Jeſus ſake*. They pretend not to Dominion over your Faith, or to be Lords or Owners of the Flock, but to be Helpers of your Joy; by their Care the Sheep are to be fed, guided, preſerved, healed and brought home. They are *Rulers* over Chriſt's Houſhold, but not by Secular Force and Rigour, not to compel Men to the Faith and Obedience of the Goſpel, otherwiſe than by Truth and Love, by Inſtruction and Perſwaſion, and declaring the Mind of Chriſt in his Word. You are not to obey Miniſters as Civil Magiſtrates, that Rule by the Sword, but thankfully receive the Truths they teach, and the Mercies they offer. Our Weapons in the Chriſtian Warfare are not *Carnal*, but *Spiritual*, to Edification, not Deſtruction, not Coercive, but Miniſterial: We are to Inſtruct and Warn, to Reprove and Exhort with Faithfulneſs and Seriouſneſs, in the Name of Chriſt, and with his Authority, which as it is another thing from the Power of a * Magiſtrate, ſo by virtue of the Order and Inſtitution of Chriſt, it is very different from the private Counſel and Admonitions of one Friend to another. The ſame Works are not done with the ſame Authority, Efficacy, Certainty, or Order by a Private Hand, as by Publick Officers. For in this Caſe you are obliged to *Submit your ſelves in the Lord*, to whatever is made known to you to be according to the Will of God, revealed in his Word. 'Tis true, if we exceed our Commiſſion, you are not to receive us, but if we keep to the Words of Chriſt, he that deſpiſeth our Meſſage, *Deſpiſeth not Man, but God.* You know how earneſtly the Apoſtle admoniſhes to this purpoſe, 1 *Theſſ.*5.12,13. *We beſeech you, Brethren, to mind them who labour amongſt you, and preſide over you,* προϊσταμένους, *in the Lord*; i.e. in the things of the Lord, and according to his Order; *and that admoniſh you, and to eſteem them more than exceedingly,* ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ, *in love, for their Work or Office ſake:* And let the Elders, who rule well, οἱ πρεσβύτεροι, *be counted worthy of double Honour*, or Recompence, as the Original Word often ſignifies, 1 *Tim.* 5. 17, 18.

---

* See Dr. *Hammond's* Paraphraſe and Annotations on 1 *Pet.*5. 1,2,3. *Acts* 11. 30. *Acts* 20.28. *Heb.*12.7,17. 1 *Tim.*1.17. 1 *Theſ.*5.12. *Tit.*3.10. 1 *Cor.*12. 28,&c.

I may be blamed by ſome, for ſaying thus much; but there are certain Seaſons, when it is expedient (at leaſt not unfit) for a Man to praiſe the Country or the Family to which he belongs, or the Society to which he is related: And therefore I here take the Liberty to *Magnifie mine Office*, tho' I ſhould *become a Fool in glorying*, 2 *Cor.* 12. 11. As to the Inſtitution, Commiſſion, and Authority of the Miniſtry, it is *not of Men, or by Man, but by Jeſus Chriſt, and God the Father, who raiſed him from the dead,* Gal. 1. 1. they received their Miniſtry *from the Lord,* Col. 4. 17. he *makes* 'em *Overſeers,* Acts 20. 28. *Timothy* is called *the Servant of the Lord,* 2 *Tim.* 2. 24. Miniſters, by their Office, are as it were his Menial Servants, that approach nearer to his Perſon than others, and are employed in his particular Buſineſs. They are Stewards over the Houſe and Family of God, *Tit.* 1. 7. *Luke* 12. 42. which is no mean ſtation. They are called *Preſidents, Guides, Rulers, Shepherds, Planters, Husbandmen, Paſtors, Ambaſſadors for Chriſt, and the Glory of Chriſt,* and *the Miniſters of his Spiritual Kingdom, Angels of the Churches, Builders of his Church,* &c. By Baptiſm to initiate Diſciples unto Chriſt, and by the other Sacrament to Confirm them, to Feed 'em with the ſincere Milk of the Word, to Intercede for them in Prayer, to Bleſs them in the Name of Chriſt, to convey his Meſſages, Inſtructions, Counſels and Comforts to 'em, which without his Inſtitution and Appointment, they could no more do, than a Meſſenger can carry a Pardon to a condemned Perſon, which his Prince never ſent. *No Man taketh the*

*the Honour to himſelf, but he that is called of God.*

2. They are deſcribed to be ſuch as *have ſpoken unto you the Word of God.* To feed the Flock, by ſound Doctrine. Serious Study of the Holy Scriptures, and diligent Preaching of the Word, is no little part of the Buſineſs of a Goſpel Miniſter. *Simon Peter, loveſt thou me? Feed my Sheep, Feed my Lambs?* As Stewards of the Houſhold, they are to provide for the Family; as Shepherds, to feed by Teachiug. And it is in great Wiſdom and Mercy to the Souls of Men, that our Bleſſed Lord has appointed ſome Perſons on purpoſe to devote themſelves to this Work; that they may be able to Inſtruct the Ignorant, and eſtabliſh the Wavering, and comfort the Sad, and recover the Backſlider; to awaken, warn, convince and encourage Others in the Chriſtian Warfare. And whatever ſome pretend, that there is no ſuch need of Preaching *now*, as there was in the Infancy of the Church; yet in all Ages, this is the *ordinary Means*, which God hath appointed, and is wont to bleſs, for the Converſion and Salvation of Souls, 1 *Cor.* 1. 21. It pleaſeth God now, as well as formerly, *by the fooliſhneſs*

*liſhneſs of Preaching to ſave them that believe.* And it is the Commiſſion of our Saviour for the Miniſterial Office, that *they Preach the Goſpel to every Creature.* And this, not only to plant a Church, but to carry on its growth; it is for *the perfecting of the Saints*, and *for the edifying of the Body of Chriſt.* The Miniſtry of the Goſpel may be needful to Converts, and Believers, and real Saints, and is ſo, there being ſomething ſtill lacking to their Faith and Comfort. And they had need to be put always in Remembrance of the Things they do know, that they may be rooted and eſtabliſhed in the Truth, 1 *Pet.* 2. 12.

It is wonderful to Obſerve, how *our Saviour* rather choſe to Convert Men, by the Preaching and Miracles of *his Apoſtles*, than by *his own*; how he would not fully convert *Paul* without the Miniſtry of *Ananias*, tho' he ſpake to him from Heaven himſelf, and reaſoned with him againſt his Perſecution; how he would not fully Convert *Cornelius* and his Houſhold, without the Miniſtry of *Peter*, tho' he ſent an Angel to direct him to a Teacher, nor would he Convert the *Ethiopian Eunuch*, without the Miniſtry of *Philip*; nor the Goaler without the Miniſtery of *Paul* and *Silas*, tho' he wrought a Miracle to prepare for his Converſion. Our Lord knew the Neceſſity that the Infants of his Family had of ſuch Nurſes, and he will keep up the Honour of his own Officers, whom he hath appointed for ſuch an End and Uſe.

How much the Welfare of the Church depends upon *the Miniſters* and *Teachers of the Word*, and how little the Beauty and Glory of Religion can ever be kept up in the World, if Miniſters do not *labour in the Word and Doctrine*, will very eaſily appear, to ſuch as conſider, how Religion has declined and been loſt, by the Ignorance, and Unfaithfulneſs, and Negligence of thoſe that ought to have Preached the Goſpel of Chriſt: And how the Denial or Contempt of the Miniſtry hath alway been accompanied with the growth of Atheiſm, Infidelity, and Prophaneſs. How ſolemnly does the Apoſtle charge the Elders of the Church of *Epheſus*, Acts 20. 28, 30. *Take heed unto your ſelves, and to all the Flock, over which the Holy Ghoſt hath made you Overſeers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his own Blood, and to warn every Man, leſt they be perverted by falſe Teachers,* &c. And how expreſly to the like purpoſe, are they required to labour with their utmoſt ſtrength in this Work, 1 *Tim.* 1. 17. 1 *Cor.* 16. 16. 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 12. They are *To give themſelves continually to Prayer, and the Miniſtry of the Word*, Acts 6. 4.

And how needful is it that they ſhould do ſo, who are to unfold the Mind of God to others; to teach them what they muſt know, believe and do, avoid, and hope for; who have ſo many Difficulties to explain, and ſo often need the Tongue of the Learned, and a good ſhare of Prudence, to ſpeak a word in Seaſon; To acquaint their Hearers with their ſeveral Maladies and Remedies, Dangers and Duties, to hold forth the Excellency of Chriſt, ſo as to make him receiv'd and obey'd, admired and loved; and to be diligent in ſuch Work in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon; managing all, as under an Awe of God, and with ſincere Compaſſion and Love to Souls.

Suppoſing *the Word of God* here to be *the Written Word*, I need not enquire curiouſly, how much of Divine Revelation, or the Written Word, was then extant, when the Apoſtle wrote this Epiſtle, (which is thought to be about *the Fifty ſeventh*, or *Fifty eighth Year* of our Bleſſed Lord, while he was a Priſoner at *Rome*, and towards the end of his firſt Impriſonment there.) All the New Teſtament ſeems to be then written, ſave the Epiſtles of St. *John*, and his *Revelations*, and the Second Epiſtle of St. *Peter*. 'Tis certain, that the whole Word of God in the Holy Scriptures, is to be explained, and applyed by Preaching, and that this is a principal part of a Miniſters Work. They therefore who pretend to the Miniſterial Office, according to the Order of Chriſt, and yet either deſpiſe, or neglect the *Preaching of the Word*, one would think, either do not underſtand their Office, or are not faithful to it.

3. Another Thing concerning theſe Deceaſed Miniſters the Apoſtle mentions, is, their *Exemplary Faith*. They would not have been propoſed as *Patterns*, with reſpect to *Faith*, if they had not been Famous and Exemplary, as to the Clearneſs of their Minds, and the Soundneſs of their Doctrine. *Follow their Faith.* Doubtleſs he means it of ſuch, who as to Knowledge, and Firmneſs of Perſwaſion, concerning the Truths of the Goſpel, and Fruitfulneſs in ſuitable Effects, did in Spirit and Practice, ſhew themſelves *Believers*. They would not otherwiſe

have been named, as fit Examples for the People to follow, as to their *Faith*. You find Miniſters are exhorted to *Take heed to their Doctrine*, 1 *Tim.* IV. 16. and to continue therein, that they *May ſave themſelves, and them that hear them*, and to *ſpeak the things that become ſound Doctrine*, 1 Tim. VI. 3. They are to keep the Doctrine of the Goſpel pure and uncorrupt, and to feed the People with the ſincere Milk of the Word. For if the Doctrine, which ſhould promote Faith and Holineſs, ſhould be depraved by the Miniſters of the Word, how is it poſſible that true Chriſtianity ſhould ſpread and flouriſh, or be preſerved and continued? What need have we to beg, that God would give and continue ſuch *Paſtors after his own Heart*, as may feed his People with *Good Knowlodge* and *Sound Underſtanding*. They muſt hold faſt the faithful Word that they have been taught, that they may be able, *by ſound Doctrine* to exhort, and convince Gain-ſayers, *Tit.* 1. 6, 9. *Chap.* 2. 1. Such Speech that cannot be condemned, that he who is of the contrary Party may be aſhamed. And how comfortably and uſefully may they Preach to others, who are firmly perſwaded of the Truth of what they ſay; who believe and live the Truths they deliver? This is a great help to Miniſters in their Work, and a great Advantage in order to Succeſs.

Theſe here, whoſe *Faith* is mentioned, were alſo *Exemplary* in all *the Fruits of Faith*: They lived up to the Doctrine they preached, and therein others are exhorted to *follow* them. They repreſented in a Holy Life, the Doctrine they taught, and ſo glorified him, in whoſe Name they diſpenſed it. By Humility and Meekneſs, Moderation and Self-denial, Zeal for the Glory of God, Mortification of Corrupt Affections, Contempt of the World, Readineſs for the Croſs, Condeſcenſion and Patience towards All, Heavenly-mindedneſs, &c. *In all things*, Miniſters *ſhould ſhow themſelves Patterns of Good Works, and be Examples unto Believers in Word, in Converſation, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith, in Purity*, Tit. II. 2, 7. 1 Tim. IV. 12.

This is the moſt likely Method to have Succeſs? 'For tho' it may now 'and then poſſibly fall out, that the Seed 'of Divine Truth, * like Corn ſown by 'a Leprous Hand, may grow up into 'ſome Fruit; yet how ſmall is the *Good*, 'that is wrought by his Doctrine, in 'compariſon of the great *Hurt* that is 'done

* Dr. *Spurſtow*'s Medit. on a Debauch'd Miniſter, *Medit.* XX 8°.

‘done by the diſſolute Life of ſuch a Miniſter? Is it likely, that he, that in the Pulpit pleads for Honour unto the Perſon of Chriſt, for Obedience to his Commands, and Faith to be exerciſed in his Promiſes, and when he is out of it, contradicts all that he hath ſaid, by a Senſual Practice; is it likely he ſhould ever win many Diſciples to Chriſt? Will Men ever hearken to ſuch, who decry Drunkenneſs, and Wantonneſs, and Covetouſneſs, &c. as the way to Deſtruction, and yet turn not their own Feet from walking therein? will they not ſay, Phyſician, heal thy ſelf? or, Thou Hypocrite, *Firſt caſt the Beam out of thine own Eye, and then ſhalt thou ſee clearly to caſt out the Mote that is in thy Brother's Eye.*

How can He be a Pattern to Believers, in thoſe Graces he is a Stranger to? How can he kindle Heavenly Affections in the Souls of others, when he feels nothing himſelf? How can he ſpeak of Divine Truth, according to the Excellency, and Neceſſity, and Importance of it, if he doth not believe, and live, and obey it himſelf? We may as well think, that a Heretick may Teach you the Truth, as well as the Orthodox; and a Schiſmatick teach you Unity and Peace, as well as a Catholick Peaceable Paſtor; or a Man ignorant of Regeneration, and the Grace of God, may teach you that which he knoweth not himſelf; or an Enemy to Piety and Charity, teach you to be Pious and Charitable, as well as any other. The Voice of *Jacob* will do little good, if the Hands be the Hands of *Eſau*. They that are unholy, and unexperienced as to real Godlineſs, they have *a ſecret Enmity* in their Hearts againſt that Holineſs, which they ſhould daily Preach, which is a Clog at their Feet, and a Gag in their Mouths, as to ſome Truths and Duties. They will ſome way or other harden, and embolden others in their Sins, as well as make themſelves, and the Offering of the Lord contemptible, by ſhewing, that they do not believe what they ſay. How can you think they ſhould lead you in the way of Holineſs, who never walked in it themſelves? or guide you to Chriſt, and conduct you in the Chriſtian Warfare, who are Servants of the World, the Devil, and the Fleſh, againſt whom they muſt Exhort you to Fight.

How dreadful will be the Account and Portion of ſuch Evil Stewards, and Unfaithful Guides, who Preach to others, and yet periſh! As the Men that were employed to build the Ark of *Noah*, yet were not ſaved in it. *He that winneth Souls is wiſe*; but it is he only, that ſhall *do*, as well as *teach* the Commandments, who ſhall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven, or ever come there. The Judge himſelf hath told us, That many in his Name may have Propheſied, and Preached, and Caſt out Devils, and yet ſhall be diſclaimed, as *Workers of Iniquity*. And it is certainly more eaſie to make *ten* good Sermons, than to practice *one*; and to expoſe and declaim againſt all Sins, than to relinquiſh any.

How terrible is that known Paſſage of *Chryſoſtom*, with relation to this? Saying, 'That he is perſwaded, that *very* '*few* of thoſe who are entruſted with 'the Goſpel, and Care of Souls, are 'likely to be Saved; and that he apprehends the far greater part will be 'damned. For this Work, ſaith he, 'requires a Soul more than ordinary; 'He had need have a Thouſand Eyes in 'his Head, and have them all awake, &c. How ſevere are the *Pſalmiſts* Words, and how upbraiding of ungodly Miniſters, *Pſal.* 50. 16, 17. *What haſt thou to do, to declare my Statutes, or that thou ſhouldſt take my Covenant into thy Mouth? ſeeing*

*ing thou hateſt Inſtruction, and caſteſt my Words behind thee.* How muſt ſuch a Man be confounded in Preaching againſt his own Sins, and pronouncing Damnation againſt himſelf? And with how little Succeſs can he pray for the People of his Charge, when he himſelf is not reconciled to God. Send for *the Elders of the Church*, when ſick, ſaith the Apoſtle, and the Prayer of Faith ſhall ſave the Sick, but 'tis the fervent *Prayer of a Righteous Man*, James V. 14, 15.

4. He mentions their *Conſtancy* and *Perſeverance in Faith and Holineſs*, 'till the happy *End*, and Exit *of their Converſation.* And this he Exhorts them to *Conſider*, to review, to reflect upon; and that not tranſiently, but with deep Attention; not once only, but again and again. To conſider what their Carriage and Deportment hath been in publick, and in private; what was their Behaviour in every Relation and Condition, as keeping a good Conſcience, both towards God and Man; and this not for a ſtart, for a little while, for a few Years only, and then drew back, or turned aſide: But conſider *The End of their Converſation.* How they finiſhed their Courſe with Joy. Their Beginning and Progreſs

was commendable, and their latter End was anſwerably good and ſafe, deſirable and happy, either by a Natural Death, in the Peace of God, or with the Crown of Martyrdom by a Violent One.

I ſhall not need to enquire, how far the Apoſtle may here refer to the Death of the firſt Martyr *Stephen*, and of *James* the Son of *Zebbedee*, who both Exerciſed their Miniſtry at *Jeruſalem*, and ſuffered Martyrdom *there*, as 'tis thought did the other *James*, the Brother of our Lord, ſeveral years before the date of this Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*.

II. Let us conſider what is the Peoples Duty to ſuch their Deceaſed Miniſters and Paſtors. It is threefold. 1. To *Remember* them. 2. To *Imitate* them in *Faith* and *Holineſs*. 3. In order to this, to *Conſider* ſeriouſly, and often *their Converſation*, and the happy End of it.

1. Remember your Spiritual Guides, who have had the Inſtruction and Conduct of your Souls, and faithfully diſcharged their Office. *Remember them*, ſo as to be thankful to God for their Gifts and Graces, and for all the Help and Aſſiſtance, you had by their Doctrine and Example, while they lived, and for

all the Goodneſs and Grace of God towards them, in enabling them to do or ſuffer his Will, with their Supports, Perſeverance, Aſſiſtances, Encouragements, and Victory. *Remember them*, ſo as to bewail your Loſs, and lay to Heart their Removal. Remember how much more you ought to have valued their Miniſtry, and how much better you might have improved it; (the very Thoughts of what you would do, if God would again have tried you in that kind, might herein be your Help.) Remember what Counſels, what Warnings, and Reproofs, what Encouragements and Conſolations, you have ever had by their means. Remember with what an Awe of God they were wont to Pray; with what a Zeal for Chriſt, and Love to Souls, they did uſe to Preach; with what humble Condeſcenſion, Meekneſs and Charity, and unblameable Converſation, they lived in this World.

Remember them, in your Thoughts and Affections, and in your Words and Actions; ſo as on all fit Occaſions to expreſs your Love to their Memory. Be ready to ſhew that you do not forget them, by your continued Reſpects and Kindneſs to the *Living*, for the ſake of

P the

the *Dead*: I mean, the many deſpiſed Widows, and Fatherleſs Children of Worthy Miniſters. Think often of them, how God honoured them, to bring many Souls to Chriſt, and to build up Others: How ſucceſsfully they managed, and comfortably finiſhed their Work. Think *what*, and *where* they now are, what they are delivered from, what they enjoy, how they are employed, &c. Don't be afraid to think often of your Deceaſed Miniſters, and Friends: 'Tis a plain Duty, and a help to many Duties, to have our Converſation in Heaven with Chriſt, and the Spirits of Juſt Men made Perfect. To think of our Holy Relations and Acquaintance, and eſpecially *Miniſters*, who are got ſafe to Heaven: It may aſſiſt and animate us, in our Spiritual Warfare. And much of the Comfort of the Life of Faith depends upon it. They are part of the Family of Chriſt, to which we are adjoined, if by Faith we are united to him, *Heb.* XII. 22, 23. We have no reaſon to believe, that they Forget us whom they have left behind; and certainly there is none, why we ſhould Forget them. Let us remember them with Pleaſure, Honour, and Love; and ſpeak of them with Reſpect, and Gratiude.

Can we think with Pleaſure of ſuch a Friend or Miniſter, of ſuch an Acquaintance or Relation, whom we tenderly love, that is many Miles diſtant from us, here upon Earth; and ſhall we be unmindful of thoſe who are in Heaven? It ſhould be a Complacential Thought, to conſider, that ſuch a Father or Grandfather, ſuch a Husband or Wife, ſuch a Child or Brother of yours or mine, are now with Chriſt, in the Boſom of his Love in Glory. That ſuch a Miniſter of Chriſt, who was my Spiritual Father, or by whom I was edified, ſtrengthened, or comforted for many Years, hath overcome, and is at reſt, has fought the good Fight, and finiſhed his Courſe. While we are in Tears and Conflicts, they are in Joy and Glory: While we are waiting at the Door, they are entered within the Vail. 'Tis our Duty to *Remember them.* And,

2. To *Follow their Faith*, that is, the Doctrine they preached, believed, profeſſed, and obeyed; or their ſound Doctrine, and Practical Godlineſs. Or their Faith may be conſidered, as regarding Doctrines to be believed and profeſſed, Promiſes to be embraced and depended on, and Precepts to be obeyed.

Such *a Faith*, as realized *the other World* to them, and help'd to crucifie them unto *this*. Such *a Faith*, as was the Evidence of things unſeen, whereby they were enabled to walk in Self-denial, Patience, and ſtedfaſt Obedience, till they came to the End of their Faith and Hope. In ſhort, we muſt follow them, as holding the Myſtery of Faith in a pure Conſcience, and expreſſing the Power of it in a fruitful Converſation.

You ſee, in what it is your Deceaſed Holy Friends, and Miniſters are to be followed, it is in *their Faith*, and in the Principal Actings and Fruits of it, ſo far as they kept *the Example of Chriſt* in their Eye, and *followed Him*, for no farther does the Apoſtle require it, 1 *Cor.* 11. 1. The Pattern of Chriſt is propos'd for Imitation in all Ages of the Church: We are no leſs obliged to it, than the Apoſtle, who prays for the *Philippians*, that the *ſame Mind* might be *in them*, that was *in Chriſt*, Phil. 2. 5. *And therefore have we boldneſs in the Day of Judgment*, ſaith another Apoſtle, becauſe *We are in the World, as he was in it*, 1 John IV. 17.

Our Lord is the only Infallible and Supream Pattern, whom tho' we cannot follow in his Miracles and Merits, and what was peculiar to him as Mediator; yet hath he ſet us *an Example*, that we ſhould tread in his ſteps, in Obedience to his Father, in Zeal for his Glory, in Submiſſion to his Will, in Patience under Suffering, *&c.* He gave us an Example of Subjection to Parents, Obedience to Magiſtrates, Painfulneſs in Preaching, Frequency in Praying, and in going up and down the World doing Good,and in Forgiving Enemies, in Charity to all Men,*&c.*

As to *all other Examples*, tho' there may be ſome Things Imitable, there are others, wherein we ſhould be cautioned not to do the like; as in *Noah* and *Lot*, *David* and *Solomon*, &c. Even St. *Peter* was a *Rock*, and an Excellent Apoſtle; but we ſhould ſplit upon that Rock, if we ſhould follow him in all his ways: If we follow him into the High Prieſt's Hall, if we imitate him in making bold with Temptation; inſtead of following Chriſt, we may be brought to deny him. Therefore St. *Paul* expreſly cautions us, how far we are to follow his Example, *Phil.* IV. 8. *Finally, my Brethren, whatſoever things are honeſt, juſt, pure, lovely, of good Report; if they have any vertue, any praiſe, think of theſe things, which you have both learned and received,* *and heard, and ſeen in me, do theſe things, and the God of Peace ſhall be with you.*

However, granting the Life of *Chriſt only* be a perfect Copy, yet the good Examples of our *Brethren*, and *Fellow-Chriſtians*, are a merciful Help, and Aſſiſtance to us, in the way to Heaven. We ſee by their *Faith* and *Patience*, that our Duty is practicable. That they who dwelt in ſuch Bodies as We, and were ſurrounded with the like Temptations, and had as many Hindrances and Difficulties, and no more, or better Aſſiſtance or Encouragement than We, have yet been enabled to pleaſe and glorifie God, and are got ſafe to Glory. We are not the Forelorn Hope, not the firſt Aſſailors in the Spiritual Warfare; We are not ſet in the Front of the Battle; many of our Fellow Chriſtians have lived and dyed in the Faith, have overcome the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil, in that very way, that we are called to do it.

Many of our Fellow Soldiers have fought the good Fight, gained the Victory, and received the Crown. Their Example tells us, that the Difficulties and Conflicts that we fear, are no other than they have experienced. They complained as much as we can, of inward Corruption, and outward Temptation;

of an unfaithful World, and a buſie Devil, and a deſperately wicked Heart; and yet by the Grace of God they have Overcome. We have a *Cloud of Witneſſes*, among our particular Friends and Acquaintance, whom we have known and loved, whom we have ſeen and heard, with whom we have convers'd and diſcours'd: And it is a great Encouragement, to conſider we are to follow *Them*. For why ſhould we be diſhearten'd, as if that were Impoſſible to us, which the Grace of God hath enabled them to do and ſuffer?

'Tis one great Deſign of God's Gifts, and Graces to *Some*, that they may Inſtruct and Edifie *Others*. The Path of the Juſt in this Senſe, is a Shining Light: We are to *Shew forth the Word of Life* in our Converſation, that we may direct others in the way: And *by our Zeal*, we are to *provoke many*.

And when the Precept is Exemplified into Pattern, and the Commands of Chriſt made legible in the Lives of Chriſtians, we are the more encouraged to obey. This hath more Influence than meer Law, and naked Authority. We find that *Examples* ſtrangely affect us, and the Lives of Holy Perſons, writ with Truth, and Judgment, and Caution, have a ſingular Advantage to attract our Imitation. When Charity and Humility, Self-denial and Patience, Piety and Devotion, are characterized in the Practice and Actions of the Saints, and are written as it were with *Light*, notwithſtanding ſome mixture of *Darkneſs*, (from Humane Paſſions, and Failings, for which in all Men there muſt be Allowance) that Holy Examples are apt to affect the Mind more deeply than Holy Laws alone. This is evident by the Malice of the Devil, and his Inſtruments againſt the Holy Scriptures, exemplified in the Godly, more than againſt the Scriptures themſelves. They can better bear the Precepts of a perfect Rule, than the imperfect practice of them in a Holy Life. They have burnt *Martyrs*, that could endure good *Books*.

Such *Examples* may be of Uſe, both to *Quicken* and *Encourage us*.

1. To quicken and excite our *Diligence*. To this purpoſe the Apoſtle makes mention of them, *Chap.* VI. 12. *Be not ſlothful, but be ye Followers of them, who by Faith and Patience inherit the Promiſes.* To cure the Sloth and Lazineſs of Chriſtians, he ſaith this, and to ſtir them

up to Holy Diligence; with this Encouragement in the following Words, that if they follow their Guides in their Faith in Chriſt, they will find him an Unchangeable, never failing Saviour: For it is added, *Jeſus Chriſt*, *the ſame yeſterday*, *to day*, *and for ever*: i. e. He will certainly receive, forgive, aſſiſt, preſerve, and ſave them, as he did their Deceaſed Guides. If we follow them, we ſhall find the ſame Comfort, and meet with the ſame Reward.

How may the Temper, and Spirit, and Carriage, of ſuch Exemplary Chriſtians, ſhame our Negligence? Their Humility and Zeal, their Gravity and Serioufneſs, their continual Awe of God, and Apprehenſion of his Eye, their conſtant Watchfulneſs over Hearts, Words, and Actions, may be conſidered to humble and ſhame us: When I think how diligently they improved their Talents, how faithfully and fervently they attended their Work, how their Hearts were in it, and how much they did in a little time, and how God was with Them in abundant Succeſs, it ſhould ſhame and quicken me. ‘Do I pray, or preach, ‘or live at that rate of Serioufneſs, Integrity, Self-denial, and Devotedneſs ‘to God, as They? Durſt they have in

‘ dulged themſelves, and pleaſed them-
‘ ſelves, and allowed themſelves the Li-
‘ berty which I take: Were they guilty
‘ of ſuch Omiſſions and Neglects as I
‘ am? Am not I more ſlight and formal,
‘ ſeldom and heartleſs in Prayer, than
‘ they were wont to be, *&c.*

If we have the ſame Spirit of Faith, with the Holy Perſons, whoſe Examples we read or hear of, theſe things will quicken and aſſiſt us; for ſo the Apoſtle argues, 2 *Cor.*IV.13. *We having the ſame Spirit of Faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I ſpoken, we alſo believe, and therefore ſpeak.* And if they do not move us, and excite us to follow them, in their Faith and Obedience, it is a ſign that we are not Partakers of *the ſame Spirit.*

2. Not only as to Duty, but let us conſider 'em for our *Encouragement* and *Comfort.* Whatever Difficulties we may meet with in the Chriſtian Race, the Conſideration of theſe Examples may encourage our Faith, and Patience, and Perſeverance. They found the Sweetneſs of Dependance upon God, and the Succeſs of a Life of Faith, and had gracious Anſwers to Prayer, and ſuitable Help in every time of need: They could ſet to

their Seal that God is true, and the Scripture true; and never any Word of his, in which they regularly truſted, did ever fail them. And is it no Encouragement, for us to be able to ſay, *Lord, our Fathers truſted in thee, and were delivered; they truſted in thee, and were not aſhamed; they cryed to thee, and thou didſt anſwer them:* 'They have told us 'what thou didſt for them: How Good 'was God, and Faithful, how Wiſe and 'Gracious: The Word of the Lord is 'tried, in ſix and in ſeven Troubles they 'found it true.

And We that live in the latter Ages of the World, have a greater Cloud of Witneſſes than others; we have the Benefit of the Experience of all the Saints, that have gone before us. They can tell us what they have found, of the falſe Cavils, Slanders and Objections of Unbelief; of the Folly and Diſingenuity of our Carnal Fears, of the Fraud of the Devil's Suggeſtions, of the certain Accompliſhment of God's Promiſes, and a good Iſſue of all Events, if we wait on the Lord, and keep his Way.

And as to many of them, we may obſerve, with what admirable *Patience* they endured greater Trials, ſharper Pains, and longer Exerciſes, without

Murmuring, and without Fainting, than ever yet We have known. How Diligent, Heavenly, and Fruitful were ſome of them, under leſs Advantages and Help than We? The Examples of the Poor may ſhame many of the Rich: The Examples of ſome young Converts, may ſhame old Diſciples: Religious Children may ſhame many Parents. There are younger Brethren, by whom the Elder are out-gone. Such who were New-born but lately, who exceed them that were in Chriſt many years before.

Had not They, whoſe *Faith* you are exhorted to *follow*, the like Temptations as you meet with? Have not you the ſame Rule to walk by, the ſame Promiſes, Aſſiſtances and Encouragements in the Way to Heaven? Are your Wants to be ſupplyed, Diſeaſes to be cured, Difficulties to be conquered, Burdens to be endured, *more*, or *greater*, or *other*, than what they met with? And was not Death the Paſſage to Glory, as to all of them, and ſometimes by Lingering, Painful Sickneſs, Antecedent to dying? Therefore you may, and ſhould take Heart by their Examples, and follow their Faith.

How you ſhould do ſo, I will ſum up in better words than my own. * ‘Let us fix upon the ſame Ends, to Glorifie God and Enjoy him; let us chooſe the ſame Guide and Captain of our Salvation, let us believe the ſame Goſpel, and build upon the ſame Promiſes, let us obey and truſt to the ſame Spirit of Holineſs and Comfort; let us live upon the ſame Truths, and exerciſe the ſame Graces, and watch againſt the ſame Sins and Corruptions; let us chooſe, prefer, and uſe, the ſame Company, and other Helps and Means of Grace, and under all the Trials and Temptations of this Life, act the ſame Faith, and Patience, and Hope unto the End; and we ſhall finiſh our Courſe as They did, and inherit the Promiſes as They do. In order whereto,

III. Let us conſider *the End of their Converſation.* Be mindful of your Deceaſed Miniſters, that you may obſerve the happy End of their Converſation, and ſo be aſſiſted to follow their Faith. Their *Converſation*, and Courſe of Life was agreeable

---

* See Mr. *Baxter*'s Life of Faith, 4°, Chap. XXII. *p.* 585. And Mr. *D. B*'s Chriſtian Commemoration and Imitation of Saints Departed, 12°. *1691.* Where theſe things are more fully expreſs'd.

greeable to their *Faith*, agreeable to the Doctrine they believed and taught, and their *End* was anſwerable: They lived in the Faith, and they dyed in the Faith, *The End of their Converſations*; an End attended with Victory and Deliverance, the ſame Word that is uſed for *Eſcape*, 1 Cor. X. 13. Conſider what Difficulties they met with, and yet did overcome; their Faith did not fail, their Hope did not periſh, their Courage did not faint. They endured to the End, and finiſhed their Courſe, came off with Victory, and are got ſafe to *Everlaſting Reſt.*

The Conſideration of this their happy End, knowing what They were, and what We are, ſhould encourage us to follow them. It ought to raiſe our Deſires and Hopes, fix our Reſolutions, anſwer our Doubts, ſcatter our Fears, make Death leſs formidable, and the Thoughts of Heaven more familiar, and ſo excite and forward our Preparations for it: That following their Faith, we may with them at laſt receive the End of our Faith and Hope, the Salvation of our Souls.

I now come to the other Part of my Subject, to ſpeak of *your Deceaſed Paſtor*. Not that I deſign to give you the Hiſtory of his Parentage, Birth, and Education, before he came to *London*, that is, before my Acquaintance with him, or yours; but ſome Account of *his Example*, *as a Chriſtian*, and *as a Miniſter of Chriſt*; that being the more ſenſible of your Loſs, you may take the more care to improve it.

And tho' I feel my ſelf a real and hearty Mourner with you, as for one whom I highly eſteemed and loved, and had a great deal of Reaſon to do ſo; I ſhall yet take care, that my Affection may not prompt me to ſay any thing concerning Him, that cannot be well atteſted, either by my own Knowledge, or by ſome of you who now hear me: As knowing that I ought not to ſpeak any thing that is not true, of a dead Friend, any more than raiſe an Evil Report of a living Enemy. But I ſpeak to thoſe, who knew his Doctrine and manner of Life, Purpoſe, Faith, Patience, Love, Long-ſuffering, and Charity.

1. He was, (conſidered *as a Chriſtian*) a lively Inſtance of inward Godlineſs and

real Religion. He believ'd and practis'd what he preach'd to others. He liv'd in the firm Perſwaſion and Expectation of the Inviſible, Everlaſting World, and in diligent Preparation of himſelf and others for it. *Humility*, the Badge of our Relation to Chriſt, was his Cloathing and Ornament: Endeavouring to approve himſelf to God, and to the Conſciences of Men, as in the ſight of God, *Not as pleaſing Men*, *but God who ſeeth the Heart*, 2 Cor. X. 14, 15.

Prayer was his Delight, Strength and Excellency. I have hardly heard of any more abundant in Prayer, more Conſtant and Conſcientious in it, with the like Variety, and Fervour upon all Occaſions. Beſides what you had the Aſſiſtance of in Publick, in his Family and Cloſet every day, and alſo with his Wife; with that Seriouſneſs and Frequency, that 'twould be thought incredible, ſhould I name Particulars. And many times, early in the Morning before Day, after the Example of his Bleſſed Maſter, he wreſtled with God in Secret Prayer. He taſted the Sweetneſs, and reaped the Benefit of ſuch Converſe with God.

Af

At other times, the *Thought* of *God*, (and how often in a day did he think of *God!*) and the very *Name* of *God*, was wont to ſtrike him with a becoming Awe and Reverence. His whole Life was almoſt a Life of *Prayer*, which made his Face to ſhine, and his Grace to thrive, and gained him ſo much of the Divine Preſence in his Publick Work, that ſometimes you might manifeſtly diſcern that God was with him. He never went about to compoſe nor preach *a Sermon*, without moſt ſerious, earneſt *Prayer* before-hand, with a particular Reference to that Occaſion. He gave himſelf *continually to Prayer*, as well as to the Miniſtry of the Word. Acknowledging the moſt and beſt of his Knowledge and Learning he got upon his Knees.

Praiſe and Thankfulneſs to God, for all his Mercies, was a great part of his daily Prayer, and made up much of his Religion. The Love of God, and the joyful Praiſes of our Redeemer, were his conſtant and moſt hearty Service. They that knew him beſt, can witneſs how much he delighted in *Singing* the Praiſes of God; and how ſtated a part of Family-worſhip he made it every day.

The Holy Scriptures were his continual, Delightful Study, as a Treaſury of Divine Wiſdom and Knowledge. He deſpiſed all Books of other Learning, in compariſon of this: And next to the Bible, he moſt eſteemed ſuch Practical Books, as Mr. *R.* and *Joſ. Allen*'s, and Mr. *Corbet*'s *Kingdom of God amongſt Men*, &c.

The *Lord*'s *Day* was his peculiar Delight, and the Solemn Worſhip of it the Joy of his Soul: He was *then* and *thereby* revived, tho' he had been ill all the Week before: And when confined to his Chamber, by Pain and Languiſhing Sickneſs, (ſo as he could not attend the Publick Aſſemblies,) how would he lament the ſlight Sabbaths he thought he kept, and made Others keep? but could add, Thanks be to God, it was *otherwiſe* formerly.

His *Relative Religion* in his Family, was moſt ſtrictly Chriſtian, and Exemplary. His Affection to his Relations, evidenced in his Concern for their Souls, and particular Recommendation of their Caſe to God, by Prayer, upon all Occaſions, aggravates their Loſs in his Death, but will make his Memory precious with them.

As to his Carriage and Behaviour abroad, he thought the Life of a Miniſter, in ſome reſpects, was ſcandalous, if it were not *Exemplary*, and managed with greater Strictneſs, than that of ordinary Chriſtians. What a Guard did he keep upon the Door of his Lips! how watchful was he over his Words! how ſhie of ordinary and common Converſation, upon this Account, becauſe he could meet with ſo little ſerious and profitable Diſcourſe, even amongſt Thoſe, of whom it might have been expected! With what Prudence and Faithfulneſs would he often begin ſuch Diſcourſe, as became a Miniſter, and a Chriſtian? ſuitable to the Circumſtances and Conditions of thoſe he converſed with? And where there was Occaſion for it, with like Wiſdom and Fidelity, would he admoniſh and reprove, to the hazard, ſometimes of loſing their Friendſhip, whom otherwiſe he had reaſon to value. But he knew, how to be ſevere againſt the Sin, and not diſcredit and expoſe the Sinner? he knew how to ſearch the Conſcience, and yet ſo far ſpare the Perſon, as not to exaſperate and provoke the Spirit.

When ſome time ſince I viſited, and prayed with him, (which I lament I did no oftner, ) enquiring concerning the State of his Soul, with Relation to God, and the other World: Whether all were well, and calm within; he told me, that through the Grace of God, he could appeal to Him, concerning his Integrity; that he hoped, *He had found Mercy to be Faithful.* Through the whole of his long Sickneſs, he had no Diſcouraging Fears, but a ſerious, ſteady Truſt, and a well-grouned Hope in God, through the Merits of his Saviour, without *high* and *full Aſſurance*; *which*, he ſaid, was not ordinarily to be expected here, where Grace is ſo Imperfect. And yet ſometimes he hath experienc'd *Extraordinary Conſolations.* He hath been found alone, all in Tears; when upon Inquiry, what it was that troubled him, and made him ſad, he anſwered, He was very far from Grief; It was not Sorrow that made him Weep, it was from Abundance of Inward Joy.

He often prayed for more *Faith* and *Patience*, deſiring that *Patience* might continue, and *have its perfect Work.* And God granted it: For he had a calm, compoſed Spirit, under very long languiſhing, and ſome painful Operations: He ſubmitted to the Hand of God in all, without murmuring. And when every Body about him ſeemed greatly concerned, he himſelf was not. Conſider *his Patience*, you that were Eye-witneſſes of it; and *Take my Brethren the Prophets, who have ſpoken to you in the Name of the Lord, for an Example* of ſuffering Affliction, and of Patience.

His ſerious Piety, was crowned with *an Extenſive Charity*. Beſides his Charity in Relieving the Poor, (in order to which he made Conſcience, to lay aſide a fit Proportion, of whatever the Providence of God allowed him; and that as ſoon as he received it, which he never after looked upon him as his own:) Beſides that ſort of *Charity*, he was in Principle and Practice, very Charitable to thoſe from whom he differed in Opinion. He loved all Men, in whom he could diſcern any thing of real Goodneſs. He did not confine the Church of Chriſt to *a Party*, or endeavour to make Proſelytes to *Any*: For he was of *none*, but *that* with all Chriſtians, for *Chriſt*, againſt the *Devil*.

He did not think it the Excellency of *Zeal*, to go further than needs, from thoſe he did not fully agree with. He uſed the Lord's Prayer in Publick, and once a Day in his Family, and thought he did his Duty therein. He had a *Zeal* for *Truth*, but likewiſe for *Piety* and *Peace*, for *Love* and *Good Works*: He remember'd that his Maſter was the Prince of *Peace*, and his Meſſage the Goſpel of *Peace*, that his Office was to be a Meſſenger of *Peace*, and that we are to follow after *Peace* as well as Holineſs, and that *Bleſſed are the Peacemakers*. He was ſenſible how much the Intereſt of Real Religion is weakened, when the Bond of *Peace* is broken; and that when we bite and devour one another, we are in danger to be conſumed one of another. He was therefore an Enemy to Cenſorious Heats and Bitterneſs, and all ſuch narrow Principles as deſtroy Love. He was of a truly Healing and Catholick Spirit. I wiſh he may be *Imitated* in theſe Things, by all who knew him.

I mention theſe Particulars, the rather, concerning *his Perſonal* Piety, to confute the Cavils of thoſe, who would run down all *the younger Miniſters* in groſs, as more looſe than their Predeceſſors.

This is an Artifice of the Devil, to hinder their Uſefulneſs; but the Foundation of it, I am perſwaded, is either *Miſtake* or *Calumny*. For what if one or two Candidates for the Miniſtry, be now and then heard of, who are taken in the Snare of the Devil, and fall from Hopeful Beginnings, ſo as to diſhonour their Profeſſion, or quit it; ſhall the reſt, who are Humble, Sober, Diligent, and Serious, be leſs eſteemed? Was there ever in any Age, any ſort of Calling, or Profeſſion of Men in the World, whereof there may not be *Some* found, who are a Reproach and Blemiſh to the reſt? Would it not be very unjuſt, that *Elder Miniſters*, who are Wiſe and Learned, Upright and Exemplary, ſhould loſe the Reverence and Honour that is due to them, if there ſhould happen to be ſome Few of their Age and Standing, who come ſhort of ſuch Qualifications? I do here moſt heartily thank God, and Rejoyce in Hope, as to the riſing Generation, that I know many, (and hear of more,) of *the younger Miniſters*, who are well qualified for their Work, by improving, growing *Parts* and *Learning*, and reſolved Induſtry after *more*; with deep Seriouſneſs and Integrity towards God: And therefore will deſerve the

Eſteem and Encouragement of all that know them.

2. Let me now Conſider him as *a Miniſter of Chriſt.* He was apt, and ready to Teach, fit for Publick Service, and Succeſsful in it. How much did he anſwer the Apoſtle's Character, 'To be 'Blameleſs, as a Steward of God, not 'Self-will'd, not ſoon Angry, not given 'to Wine, not Contentious, not given to 'filthy Lucre; a Lover of Hoſpitality, a 'Lover of good Men; ſober, juſt, holy, 'temperate, holding faſt the faithful 'Word, as he had been taught; able, by 'ſound Doctrine, to exhort, and to convince Gain-ſayers; making it his Buſineſs to ſave himſelf, and them that 'heard him, 1 *Tit.* VII. 8, 9. His Heart was in his Work, and he wholly gave himſelf to it. He did not ſeek great things to himſelf:. The Honour of Chriſt, and the Salvation of Souls, was what he aimed at, and longed for, and laboured for.

And ſuch was his Unwearied *Diligence*, in the well Improvement of his Time, that he quickly grew Rich in all Spiritual Gifts, by the Bleſſing of God on the diligent Hand: And from time to time he increaſed conſiderably. He found it true, That *to him that hath*, and uſeth well what he hath, *to him ſhall be given, and he ſhall have more abundantly.* He knew the Weight of the Miniſterial Work, to watch for the Flock, to ſtrengthen the Weak; to confirm the Strong, to ſatisfie the Doubtful, to reſolve the Scrupulous, to anſwer Caſes of Conſcience, &c. And who is ſufficient for theſe things, without a great deal of Induſtry, in hope of Divine Aſſiſtance? He knew the Difficulty of his Work, to evidence Truth to the Conſcience, to awaken Sinners to Repentance, and then to manifeſt Chriſt the Redeemer, and Saviour of Sinners; to Reprove ſome with Meekneſs, and others with Sharpneſs; to pour Balm into wounded Spirits, and to ſpeak a word in Seaſon to the Wearied Soul; to difference the Sheep from the Goats, the Precious from the Vile, &c. And to manage all this, with a deep ſenſe of the Worth of *Souls*, and the ineſtimable Price wherewith they were purchaſed, and the Aweful Account that he muſt hereafter give to the Great Shepherd. The Conſideration of theſe things, made him Diligent, and Reſolved, and Unwearied in what he Undertook, ſo long as he was Able.

Tho' he were as well able, as moſt, with very little Preparation, to ſpeak pertinently and uſefully upon any Subject; yet he made Conſcience, not to give to God that which coſt him nothing. He would not utter that in Publick, which he had not conſidered, and digeſted, and prayed over. He durſt not preſume, in the Name of Chriſt, to vent raw and indigeſted Notions, which he had not well thought of; or to entertain his Hearers, with any looſe and rambling Thoughts, that came next into his Head.

As to his *Style*, he was not for an affected Strain of Words; yet far from taking any ſuch Liberty, as argued Indiſcretion, or expoſed to Contempt. He hath given ſufficient Proof, upon ſeveral Occaſions, that he was Maſter of the beſt Language, whenever he pleaſed to make uſe of it; but had the Wiſdom, to ſuit his Words, as well as Matter, ſo as might beſt anſwer the End, of doing Good to thoſe to whom he Preached.

You know very well, that *Preaching* was that part of his Work, wherein his Heart was more eſpecially engaged: And that he durſt not ſpeak to ſecure, drowſie Sinners, concerning *God* and *Chriſt*, *Heaven* and *Hell*, in a cold and careleſs manner. He knew the weightieſt Matter, without lively Application to enforce it, is but like a Bullet without Powder. With what tender Affection, would he invite Sinners to Chriſt? With what moving Expoſtulations, would he addreſs himſelf to all ſorts? In ſuitable Expreſſions to Young and Old! With Clearneſs he would Open, and Apply the Doctrinal Articles of Religion, and, by Catechiſing, inſtruct the Ignorant. With Strength and variety of Arguments, he enforced the Duties of Chriſtian Practice. And how readily did he embrace all Opportunities of doing Good in this kind, to the utmoſt of his Strength, and beyond it?

He would often uſe the Expreſſion of the Apoſtle, *I am not ſent to baptize*, (comparatively,) *but to preach the Goſpel*, which is the Power of God to the Salvation of the Soul. Not that he neglected the Adminiſtration of the Sacraments: For, beſides the *Lord's Supper*, which he adminiſtred every Month, he had great Succeſs in bringing many Adult Perſons to be Baptized, in the Publick Congregation: Sometimes ſeveral in one day.

He was careful to follow his Publick Teaching, with Private Inſtruction and Viſits, eſpecially of the Sick; ſo far as his Relation to ſo many, and bodily Weakneſs would permit. With Tenderneſs would he apply Comfort to the Mourners in *Sion*. He was skilful in binding up the Broken in Heart. Many reſorted to him upon that Account. And with Compaſſion and Gentleneſs he would deal with Offenders, in order to their Recovery. How earneſtly did he deſire, and ſeek, the Peace, and Holineſs of his People? His very Soul was grieved, if he heard of any of them, walking diſorderly. He could ſay, with the Apoſtle, *I have you in my heart, and God is witneſs, how greatly I long after you all, in the Bowels of Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Phil. 7. 8.

You remember, concerning his *Preaching*, how *practically* both for Matter and Manner, he inſiſted on the Great Things of Religion: He did not amuſe his Hearers, (whom he conſidered, as near the Grave, and the Eternal World,) with *Controverſies*, which they need not underſtand; and concerning which, Wiſe and Good Men may have different Sentiments, and yet be *Wiſe* and *Good*, be accepted of God, and bear with one another.

He carefully avoided *Extremes*, in opening and applying the Truths of the Goſpel. He was wont to exhort Men, to work out their Salvation with all Diligence, and to ſtrive to the utmoſt, to enter into Heaven; and yet after all, to truſt and rely *only* on the Mediation, and Righteouſneſs of Chriſt. He preach'd, and prov'd, the Neceſſity of an *Imputed Righteouſneſs*, and yet urged the Neceſſity of an *Inherent One*. That the Prieſtly Office of Chriſt, and his Sacrifice for Sin, might be honoured, and yet the Holy Ghoſt, in his ſanctifying Influence, may be honoured too. He did not make *Morality*, the whole Duty of Man; nor yet deceive the People, by ſaying, that Chriſt Repented for them, and Believed for them. He magnified the *Special Grace* of God, in the Converſion of a Sinner, and yet preached *Repentance towards God*, as neceſſary to Forgiveneſs, with *Faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*: Without curiouſly determining which is *firſt*, when *both* are needful, and never parted. He laid the whole ſtreſs of our Salvation on Jeſus Chriſt. He aſcribed the Beginning, Progreſs, and Finiſhing of all Spiritual Good, entirely to the Free-grace of God. And yet the Impenitence, Unbelief, and Damnation of Sinners,

ners, he juſtly charged on their own Wilfulneſs, in hearkening to the Devil. And if this be *Legal Preaching*, what is it to preach the *Goſpel* of Chriſt?

Accordingly we find, that God honoured him with great Succeſs. He had Eminent Seals of his Miniſtry, at his firſt Beginning, and many more afterwards: *He was a good Man, and full of the Holy Ghoſt, and Faith, and much People were added to the Lord.* There are many of you, who bleſs God, that you ever ſaw or heard him. You are his Witneſſes, that he did not run in vain, nor labour in vain. His Preaching was made effectual to the Converſion of many. His Tongue was a Tree of Life unto many: You will be his Crown of Rejoycing, in the Day of the Lord. And if They that be wiſe, ſhall ſhine as the Brightneſs of the Firmament; and *They that turn many to Righteouſneſs, ſhall ſhine as the Stars for ever*, Dan. XII. 3. We may believe, he will have a proportionable Reward.

His extraordinary Application to his Work, and Diligence in it, (which haſtened his Death,) may increaſe his Glory, Tho' ſome make a Queſtion, whether a Miniſter, who Converts many Souls here; or another, that is as faithful and diligent, and yet hath not ſuch Succeſs: Which of theſe ſhall have the moſt Glory in Heaven. Some think the Second, becauſe the one had much Encouragement and Comfort here, which the other had not, for want of Succeſs; and yet might ſay, *Tho' I have laboured in vain, and ſpent my ſtrength for nought; yet ſurely my Judgment is with the Lord, and my Work with my God.* I ſhall not loſe my Labour, *Iſa.* XLIX. 4. And as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 2 *Cor.* II. 15. *We are unto God, a ſweet Savour of Chriſt, in them that are ſaved, and in them that periſh.* 'Tis certain, he bare you much upon his Heart, in daily Prayer, in order to the Succeſs of his Miniſtry among you: And gave Thanks to God for any ſuch Fruit, for any Service he had been enabled to do for your Souls. And was affected with your grateful Senſe of it, teſtified by your Kindneſs to him, in his laſt Sickneſs, which he thankfully acknowledged.

Some of you will never forget the *Laſt Sermon* he preached in Publick, when with much Difficulty he was brought into the Pulpit, how he ſpake as in the View and Senſe of another World. With what ſerious Affection he prov'd, and preſs'd the Obligation we are under, *Whether we live, that we live to the Lord; or whether we dye, that we dye to the Lord*; ſo that, *Whether we live or dye, we are the Lords*, Rom. XIV. 8. and that if we be thought *beſides our ſelves*, or *ſober*, it is for your ſakes, 2 *Cor*. V. 13. How agreeable to the Senſe of his Heart, was it for him, from ſuch a Paſſage to ſay, 'Let me be eſteemed a Fool, or a Madman, and 'beſides my ſelf, if I may but gain *One* '*Soul*; let the Devil roar againſt me, if 'I can but ſnatch the Prey out of his 'Jaws; let him calumniate and revile 'me, if I can but weaken his Kingdom. But when by ſuch an Eſſay, he was made ſenſible of his own Weakneſs, and found himſelf really diſabled for Publick Service, he then declared he was ſatisfied; *Now*, ſays he, *I know my Work is done*.

If any of you are ready to Object, that his Work might not have been done ſo ſoon, if he had prudently managed his Health and Strength, and not ſhortned his Days by *Over-doing*; I grant, that his Zeal and Fervour, and unwearied Diligence, tho' from a good Principle, might, as to Humane Proſpect, have been managed ſo, as to continue his Uſefulneſs longer: But let us take heed, not to blame him too much for *Imprudence* in this Matter, unleſs we are certain, that we know what it is to long for the Salvation of Souls, to be filled with love to Chriſt, and to live above the Love of Life, at the rate he did. However, * it may be reckoned as one of *Satan*'s *Temptations*, to the moſt diligent and uſeful Miniſters, by over-doing, to lay a Snare for their Lives; laviſhing their Strength, in a Prodigality of Pains, for the good of Souls, which, like a Thief in a Candle, immediately waſts them; whereas a better husbanded Strength might be more advantagious, by continuing the Light longer: And yet their Ends are ſo ſincere, their Work ſo pleaſant, and their Hearts ſo enflamed with Zeal, that they ſeldom obſerve, as they might, that the Devil is glad of the Opportunity, to deſtroy them with their own Weapon.

*Dr. *Gilpin* of Temptation, 4°. Part. III. Chap. 15.

This many of his Friends took Notice of; among others, that Great and Good Man, Mr. *Baxter*, who very much eſteemed and loved him, (not long before he left this World,) he ſent him this kind Meſſage, That he ſhould take heed, *leſt he ſpent too faſt*. That Mr. *Baxter* loved him, I reckon to his Honour: He was one of many, who thank'd

God for the Aſſiſtance he received, as a Chriſtian, and as a Miniſter, from the uſeful Books, Preaching, and Converſation of that Excellent Man: I freely concur with him therein, having reaſon to thank God upon the like Account.

He was Fervent in Spirit, ſerving the Lord: His own Soul was fill'd with Zeal, to kindle Holy Fire in the Souls of others. He was willing to ſpend, and to be ſpent: And hereby he waſted, and at laſt conſumed himſelf. He ran faſt, and was the ſooner at his Journeys End. But if we judge of our Days and Time on Earth, by the Good we do in this World, and the Progreſs we make in preparing for another; that is, if we judge by weight, and not by meaſure; *He lived long, he died old*, and *full of days.* Many a Man with a grey Head, had not lived ſo much, tho' he might have been longer in the World: For he lived more in a Year, than many do in ſeven. He did more Service in leſs than *Thirty three Years*, than many do in *Threeſcore.* Tho' we reckon God took him off in the midſt of his Days, and in the midſt of his Miniſtry; it was not too ſoon for Him, tho' it may be for you. He was ripe and ready.

And conſidering his long languiſhing Pains and Weakneſs, (under all the Attempts and Endeavours for his Recovery, which Humane Art, Skill, and Care, with the Earneſt Prayers of many for Succeſs, could contribute:) We may ſay that God was kind and gracious to call him home. He did not ſo properly take away his Life, as * *beſtow Death.* Or to uſe the Words of † an Eminent, Elder Prophet, who went to Heaven the ſame Day, (*Elijah* and *Eliſha*, an Aged *Paul*, and a Young *Timothy*, within few Hours) who ſpeaking of Another on the like Occaſion, ſaith, *That he went out like one of the Lamps of the Sanctuary, with a ſweet perfume:* So hath my dear Brother left this World, and left a Good Name, as of a precious, ſweet-ſmelling Odour behind him.

And now *He is gone*, ſhould I ſay any thing further to *Surviving Relations*, and to you that ſate under his Miniſtry; I ſhall but open another Sluce of Sorrow. If I ſhould conſider him as *a Husband*, I might ſpeak to Her, who ſo carefully and diligently aſſiſted him in his long *Sickneſs*, and beſeech her to Remember, how he was the Guide of her Youth; to Remember his Love to her Perſon, and his Love to her Soul, and beg of God, that ſhe may Experience the promiſed Bleſſing, *Iſa.* LIV.5. *Thy Maker is thine Husband, the Lord of Hoſts is his Name, and thy Redeemer the Holy One of* Iſrael, *the God of the whole Earth ſhall he be called.*

---

* *Non tam ereptam ei vitam à Diis Immortalibus, ſed Donatam Mortem.* Cicero *concerning* Craſſus.

† Dr. *Sam. Anneſly*, concerning Dr. *Drake*.

For *his Children*, who may yet be more profited by our Prayers, than Counſel: let us pray to God, that as their Father's Memory is Bleſſed, his Poſterity after him may be ſo. And we may do this with the more Hope, becauſe there is the Entail of Covenant Mercy, to be pleaded from Generation to Generation, both on the *Father*'s ſide, and on the *Mother*'s; as being both deſcended from *Excellent Chriſtians*, and *Eminent Miniſters.* Upon which Accounts, you are encouraged to truſt God, as to *the Children.* Hoping that their Father's God, and their Grand-fathers God, will be *their God*, and *Guide.*

Should I conſider him as a *Son*, as *a Brother*, as *a Kinſman*, as *a Friend*, &c. and how he carried it in each Relation, I muſt be very large. You are ſenſible of your Loſs, be thankful to God for him, Remember his Example, follow his Faith, think of him with Pleaſure, and not with Grief; not as loſt, but as delivered, and crowned, and at Reſt in Everlaſting Joy.

To *You* who attended his Miniſtry, and ſhall behold him no more in the Land of the Living, nor ever hear him more in this, or any other Pulpit; let me add a few Words; *Remember him who hath ſpoken to you the Word of God.* Eſpecially be careful to practice the Sermons, you have heard him preach, and ſeen him live: Imitate whatſoever you ſaw of the Image and Life of Chriſt in him; and write down any thing that was very Remarkable, that you ever heard from him in Publick or Private; any thing that did particularly Affect you, or may be of Service to you.

You have been favoured with a Succeſſion of ſuch Burning and Shining Lights, as are not ſet up in every Candleſtick. Remember the Sound Inſtructions, the Faithful Warnings, the Earneſt Exhortations, the Fervent Labours, and Exemplary Lives of your Deceaſed Guides. What Fruit may God expect from you, after ſuch a Seeds-time as you have had! Your laſt Miniſter had a Lean, Withered, Waſted, Conſumed Body, that you might be fat and flouriſhing in the Courts of the Lord.

But *You* are of *two Sorts* : Either you have profited by his Miniſtry, or not. If the former, you have reaſon to be thankful to God. You that have been convinced, and awakened by his Preaching, that have been touched at the Heart under his Miniſtry, who have often gone away ſtriking of your Breaſts, and with Weeping Eyes driven to your Knees, when you came home, and obliged to come to him again, ſaying, *Sir*, *What muſt I do to be ſaved? You* cannot but feel and lament this Loſs. Your affectionate Tears are his Commendation. And of ſeveral of you he might ſay, with the Apoſtle to the *Corinthians*, *Tho' you have Ten thouſand Inſtructers in Chriſt, ye have not many Fathers; for in Chriſt Jeſus I have begotten you by the Goſpel*, 1 Cor. IV. 15. To the like purpoſe I might ſpeak to *Others*, who have by his Aſſiſtance, been built up in their Holy Faith, confirmed, ſtrengthened, encouraged, eſtabliſhed, and comforted.

There is another Sort, who reap'd no ſuch Advantage by him. His Death is a ſharp Reproof to *Such*. How far unprofitable Hearers may be guilty of the Death of their Miniſters, as well as an Un-

Unfaithful Miniſter of the Blood of Souls, may deſerve your Conſideration. With how many did he prevail, but could not with *You*! He ſhall now be a Reprover to you no more. Be perſwaded to look back, and think with your ſelves, what earneſt Entreaties he uſed with you, in the Name of Chriſt, beſeeching you to be reconciled to God. How he longed for your Salvation: How he ſtudied, and prayed, and waited for Succeſs. Be not deceived, not a Sermon he ever preached, or a Conviction you ever had under his Preaching, but muſt be accounted for. Tho' the Man be dead, and the Miniſter be dead; yet his Meſſage doth not dye, and ſhall not fall to the Ground. Tho' all Fleſh be Graſs, and the Glory of it as the Flower of the Field, yet *The Word of the Lord abideth for ever*, and not a Tittle of it ſhall be unaccompliſhed.

It will be ſad indeed, if he that ſpent his Health, and Strength, and Life, for you, ſhould be obliged at laſt to Witneſs againſt you, and to ſay, (tho' not with ſuch compaſſionate Words and Tears as formerly,) '*Lord*, I did Inſtruct, Admoniſh, and Exhort them, 'in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon; but could 'not perſwade them to leave their Sins, 'and come to Chriſt, that they might 'have Life. I told them of the Danger 'of their preſent State, and what was 'like to be the End of it. I told them 'plainly, again and again, that *now only* 'was the time to be reconciled to God; 'I opened to them the Goſpel-Covenant, 'and ſhewed them the Riches of God's 'Grace in Chriſt, and his Readineſs, and 'Sufficiency to ſave the chiefeſt of Sin-'ners, and that his Blood cleanſeth from 'all Sin. But they would not conſider, they 'would not regard, they would dye! O with what concerned, and awakened Souls, ſhould *We Miniſters* ſtudy, preach and pray, when every Sermon, for ought we know, may witneſs againſt *Some* of thoſe that hear it, in the Day of Reckoning! O pity Us, and therein your Selves! for *We do not deſire the woful day, Lord, thou knoweſt.*

'What would you have us ſay *, in 'the Day of Judgment, if God ſhould 'ask us? Did you tell this Sinner of his 'Need of Chriſt, of the Miſery of his 'Natural, Sinful State, of the Glory of 'the World to come, of the Vanity of 'this, *&c.* Should we lye, and ſay, We 'did not? We muſt unavoidably bear 'Witneſs againſt you, and ſay; Lord, we 'did

* See more to this purpoſe, in Mr. *B's Sermon of Judgment*, 8°. *p.* 30, 31.

did what we could, according to our weak Abilities, to reclaim them: Indeed, our own Thoughts of Everlaſting Things were ſo low, and our Hearts ſo dull, that we muſt confeſs we did not follow them ſo cloſe, nor ſpeak ſo earneſtly as we ſhould have done. We confeſs we did not ſpeak to them with ſuch melting Compaſſion, and with ſuch Streams of Tears beſeech them to regard, as a Matter of ſuch great Concernment ſhould have been ſpoken with. But yet we told them the Meſſage of God, and we ſtudied to ſpeak it to them, as plainly and as piercingly as we could. Fain we would have convinced them of their Sin and Miſery, but we could not: Fain we would have drawn them to the Admiration of Chriſt, but they made light of it, *Mat.* 22. 5. We would fain have brought them to the Contempt of this vain World, and to ſet their mind on the World to come, but we could not.

‘ This will be the *Witneſs*, that many hundred Miniſters of the Goſpel muſt give in againſt the Souls of their People at that Day.

But to draw to a Cloſe, Let us all be affected with his Death, ſo as wiſely to improve it. The Removal of ſuch an one, at his Age, is *a Publick Loſs*; not only to his Family, and to the Congregation; but to the Poor, to the City, to the Nation; to the Church of Chriſt. One of a clear Head, and warm Heart; who underſtood, believ'd, and obey'd the Goſpel. One of a Peaceable, and Publick Spirit; Abundant in Prayer, and of an Exemplary Life, and of Extraordinary Diligence to do Good: Being fitted for it, as he was filled with Love to Chriſt, and the Souls of Men, to carry on the great Deſign of Faith and Holineſs, to the utmoſt of his Power, in the Station God hath put him: And full of Thoughts and Care therein to abide with God. But mourn *not for Him.* Some ſorrowful Concern, 'tis true, is unavoidable, if you are ſenſible of your Loſs; and 'tis alſo fit and becoming: For 'tis a Judgment upon any, and a Reproach upon *a Miniſter*, to dye unlamented: As if his Life were of no Uſe, and the World were weary of him. But you need not mourn *for Him*, when you conſider Who he was, and Where he Now is, being exalted to a higher Sphere of Action and Enjoyment, for which through Grace and Holy Diligence he was prepared: And ſo for ever delivered from all Pain and

Sickneſs, from Sin and Sorrow, Corruption and Temptation. If you follow his Faith and Patience, you ſhall meet him again, in Unutterable and Endleſs Joy.

Hereupon you will do well to admit the Thought, that all *your other Miniſters* are mortal and dying, and that *you your Selves* are ſo : And therefore ſhould improve their Lives and Labours, as you ſhall wiſh you had done when *They* are Dead, or when *You* your ſelves are ready to dye.

To *Conclude*, Becauſe He alone who made this Breach, hath the Reſidue of the Spirit, and can ſupply it ; let me adviſe you, tho' the Shepherd be ſmitten, yet that the Sheep do not ſcatter. Let not this Breach occaſion Others ; but Agree together, and take the beſt Advice you can, in looking out ſpeedily for a *Suitable Supply*. And the Lord direct you to a Man after his own Heart, that may be like-minded with *my Deceaſed Brother*. And whatever you have received, and heard, and learnt, and ſeen in Him, as a Follower of Chriſt, that do ; and *The God of Grace, and Peace, be with you.* Amen.

The End.

A

# A
# Funeral Sermon
PREACHED
Upon the DEATH of a
moſt Hopeful, Young Miniſter,

**Mr. SAMUEL BYFIELD:**

Who died

At *Plymouth* in *Devon*, *March* 27.
1698. *Ætat.* 27.

With ſome Account of his
Character.

---

By *JOHN SHOWER.*

---

*LONDON:*
Printed for *Sam. Crouch*, at the Corner of
*Popes-Head-Alley* in *Cornhill*; and *J. Lawrence*, at the *Angel* in the *Poultry*, 1699.

# A
# Funeral Sermon
## On the Death of
## Mr. *Samuel Byfield*.

---

### ECCLES. ix. 10.

*Whatſoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no Work nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wiſdom in the Grave, whither thou goeſt.*

WE little think what Adorable Wiſdom and Goodneſs there is, in God's hiding from us the Knowledge of Future Events; that we cannot tell before-hand what ſhall befall us, either of Good or Evil: That we may not be lifted up, nor caſt down, by unſeaſonable and unbecoming Joys or Sorrows; but mind our preſent Duty, and depend upon God's Providence, without Sollicitude about the Evils that may happen; or Confidence and Security as to the Good we ſhall enjoy. We little think how kind, and how wiſe God is in thus concealing from us the Time of our Death, and of our Friends; not ſuffering us to know how long we or they ſhall live: For, among other Conſiderations to manifeſt the Wiſdom and Kindneſs of the Divine Conduct in this Matter; What Student could have any Heart to improve his Time, and take Pains to be qualified for Publick Service, if he knew for certain that he ſhould dye, as ſoon, or before he had finiſht his Studies, and never enter upon the Publick Stage, or but juſt appear and be call'd away? What Parent would be at the Charge of a Liberal Maintenance for the Education of a Son, in Order to Publick Uſefulneſs, in Church or State, if he knew for certain he ſhould not out-live his preparatory Studies, or be uſeful but a very little while?

If God did not hide from us the Knowledge of Future Events, eſpecially that of our own Death, and of our Relations, moſt of the Affairs of this Life would be inverted, chang'd, clog'd and hinder'd: Whereas, as our Caſe is now ſtated, our Way is plain; we are to depend upon God's Providence, and be diligent in the Duties of our ſeveral Places, leaving all Events to his Conduct and Counſel, to his Wiſdom and Will. If Scholars or their Parents ſhould be diſcouraged by the Uncertainty of Life, not knowing but after all their Care, and all their Preparations, they may live but a little while; We muſt throw off all Concern for Religion, and the Souls of Men, and the Churches of Chriſt. It would diſhearten us from taking any Care of Poſterity, and Endeavouring to Spread and Propagate the Goſpel of Chriſt. No, let the Wiſe God govern his own World, and freely diſpoſe of Us and Ours as he pleaſes; Let it be our Care diligently to apply our Selves to our preſent Buſineſs, and be faithful to the Truſt committed to us, becauſe 'tis uncertain how long, or how little Time we, or they ſhall live. Let us take the more heed, to Improve the preſent Seaſon, and do whatſoever we do, with all our Might, becauſe this is *the only Time*, (and 'tis a limited and uncertain Time,) *There is no Work, no Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wiſdom in the Grave whither thou goeſt.*

'Tis well known that the Death of a Worthy young Miniſter in the Country, (whoſe Parents, Friends, and Relations are many of them here,) occaſions my ſpeaking to you upon this Subject, which I ſhall endeavour practically to Improve, and Enforce, by ſaying ſomething of Him in the Cloſe.

After a large Diſcourſe of the various Diſpenſations of Providence, towards the Righteous and the Wicked; or that none can know the peculiar Favour of God, or the Contrary by what befalls him: The Wiſe Man adviſes, that we comfortably Enjoy the Bleſſings of Life, whilſt they are in our Power; and be diligent to do all the Good we can, whilſt we live, becauſe ſuch a Capacity ceaſeth, whenever we dye: That we embrace every Occaſion that offers it ſelf, and improve it with utmoſt Diligence; becauſe *now* is the Time of Action; *now*, before we go down into the Grave, the Houſe appointed for all the Living. This he adviſeth to, as to all Affairs, which relate either to the Body or the Mind;

whether as to Mens Buſineſs, in this World, or in preparing for another. *Now* is the Seaſon for *Work* and *Labour*. Whatſoever it is, we ſet our ſelves to, let us heartily, and in good earneſt mind it. Let us do it *with all our Might, for there is no Work, Contrivance, or Thought, no Knowledge or Wiſdom in the Grave, whither thou goeſt.*

Under theſe various Words ſome obſerve, that all the whole Wiſdom of Mankind may be comprehended; for Action is imploy'd in ſome Work or other, to which we muſt bend our Thoughts, or Contrive and *Deviſe* how to do it: And, for that end, learn Sciences; which may be underſtood, by what we render *Knowledge*: But eſpecially, ſtudy *Wiſdom*, unto which Sciences are an Entrance, that we may accompliſh what we deſign, and know how to uſe the Fruit of our Labour. And, I ſhall apply it to *Religion*, that being more principally intended, and the One Thing neceſſary, to which we ſhould apply our ſelves with all our Might, whilſt the Seaſon allotted for it, doth yet continue. *Whatſoever thy Hand findeth to do*; whatſoever Work and Duty God hath allotted thee, in this preſent World, preparatory to a Future and Eternal State; Do it *with all thy might.* The Motive is added, as a Reaſon to enforce it; *For there is no Work, nor Device, nor Knowledge in the Grave whither thou goeſt.*

The ſerious Thoughts of the Grave, where none of the Work and Buſineſs of Life can be done, ſhould quicken us to ſerious Diligence, to Work out our Salvation; or ſhould engage us to do our preſent Work with all our Might.

And here we may Conſider, *Firſt*, What *this Work* is, that is to be done within the Compaſs of this preſent Life, which cannot be done when Life is ended. *Secondly*, What is to be underſtood, by doing it with all our Might. *Thirdly*, Wherein lyes the force of the Argument; or what Reaſons are contain'd in the Conſideration of the Grave, and the unactive State of the Dead, to engage to this ſerious Diligence in our preſent Work.

*Firſt*, What is this Work which we have to do in this World? 1. As we are Reaſonable Creatures, it is to glorifie God, who is the Author of our Being; our abſolute Owner and Soveraign, to whom we are Accountable, and conſequently are obliged to improve all our Talents, as knowing there will be a Day of Reckoning, and that we ſhall be accordingly Rewarded or Puniſhed.

2. If we are conſider'd as Apoſtate, Fallen, Guilty Creatures, our Work is to ſeek Reconciliation with God, thro' our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: To have his Favour and Image reſtor'd; To get the Curſe remov'd, which Sin has brought us under, and ſecure an Intereſt in the Bleſſings of the New Covenant: In Order thereunto, we are to yield our ſelves to the Lord, Conſenting, and Ingaging to follow Chriſt, as the Captain of our Salvation; that being United to Him, and made Partakers of his Spirit, we may ſerve him in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs all our Days, in Hopes of Eternal Life.

3. Being Conſecrated and Devoted to Chriſt, our Life and Time muſt be employ'd according to his Direction and Order. Partly in his immediate Service; partly in thoſe Things that may help us to Serve and Glorifie him: And partly in doing thoſe Things, in our ſeveral Relations and Callings, which he will mercifully interpret a Glorifying of him; and this according to the ſeveral Seaſons aſſign'd and allotted us, as proper for every part of our Duty. Some Works

are to be prefer'd before others, and All cannot be done *at once*; but there is a proper *Time* and *Seaſon* for every Part of our Work, which muſt be attended to; and yet the Whole of it ſhould be minded by us, as Probationers for an Eternal State, and Expectants of it: And therefore All ſhould be done with ſome reference to another World.

*Secondly*, What is the Import of the Expreſſion, Doing it with *all our might*. This may be underſtood, either in Oppoſition to *Dilatorineſs and Delay*; It muſt be done preſently and out of hand: Or in Oppoſition to *Lazineſs and Sloth*; That we mind it with Earneſtneſs, Fervour and Zeal: Or in Oppoſition to *Wearineſs and* Fainting; that we Continue and Perſevere to the End.

1. In Oppoſition to *Delay*. Our Work is of that Nature and Neceſſity, that it muſt not be put off to Hereafter: We muſt preſently apply our ſelves to it, leſt we never have another Seaſon or Opportunity, if we neglect the preſent: And we are loſt for ever, if this Work be delay'd till our Glaſs is run, and our Time ended.

2. We muſt do it with all our Might, in Oppoſition to *Negligence and Remiſneſs*, Sloth and Idleneſs. A ſleepy careleſs Indifference, is of all things moſt to be dreaded and avoided, in Matters of ſuch moment. The ſlothful Servant is a wicked Servant. Hence the many Exhortations, To *give all Diligence to make our Calling and Election ſure. Not to be ſlothful in Buſineſs; but fervent in Spirit, ſerving the Lord.* To *be Diligent that we be found of Chriſt in Peace, without Spot and Blameleſs.* To *ſtrive to enter into the ſtrait Gate*, &c. Every ſlight Endeavour will not ſerve. Heartleſs, lazy Seeking will not do. We muſt make Religion the Buſineſs of our Lives; Attend to it as our main Concern. Thouſands of careleſs Chriſtians, will find the Door of Heaven ſhut for want of *ſtriving* to enter.

3. In Oppoſition to *Wearineſs and Diſcontinuance.* With all our Might, implies Conſtancy and Perſeverance. 'Tis not enough to begin well; we muſt be *ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord:* We muſt *Indure to the End*, if we be ſaved: Not only fight, but hold on to Victory. We muſt perſevere to finiſh our Courſe, whether we have a longer or a ſhorter Time al-

low'd us for it. If we *begin in the Spirit*, but *end in the Fleſh*, we ſhall loſe all that we have wrought, and our Labour be in vain, and ſo our latter End worſe than our Beginning.

*Thirdly*, Wherein lyes the Strength and Force of this Argument; From the Conſideration of *the Grave*, and the UnaƐtive State of the Dead: That nothing of the Work of Life can be done, but before we dye; *Therefore*, to do what we do, *now*, with all our Might. I ſhall endeavour to amplifie this in ſeveral Conſiderations.

1. If we look to the Grave, we ſhall thereby be made ſenſible; that it is but *a ſhort Time at longeſt*, that we have for this Work. How commonly is the Life of Man in this World reckon'd by a few Days; and ſometimes by *One* Day: *That he may accompliſh as an Hireling his Day.* Yea, he is ſaid to come up like a Flower, and then quickly he is cut down. He flees as *a ſhadow*, and continueth not. And of this little Time, how much is ſpent before we come to know our Work and Buſineſs; either as *Men*, or as *Sinners*, or as *Chriſtians*? Before we know what we are, and what we are capable of, and what we need, and for what End

we came into the World,and what ſhould be our Imployment here. And afterward, how much of our little Time is ſpent in the neceſſary Care of the Body? How little is left for the Service of the Soul? How ſhort a Space is Seventy, or Fourſcore Years for a Work of Eternal Concernment? And yet, how few live half that Time?

Not but that the time allotted us in this World, to prepare for Eternity, is long enough for our Work, if we mind it, and improve it. Few have Reaſon to Complain for want of Time, if they did not miſimploy it: But we trifle away the Day, and then the Night overtakes us e're we are aware; and when our Time is gone, we cry for more. The moſt think they have *Time enough*; ſometime or other hereafter, they ſhall have Leiſure and Opportunity to mind Religion, and make their Peace with God, and Work out their Salvation: And yet Young and Old will grant, that Time is ſhort, and Eternity at hand; and the Life of Man but a very little Thing, on which our Everlaſting State depends.

We cannot deny, but in a few Years, we muſt lye down in the Duſt,and make our Beds in Darkneſs, and be Buried out of ſight, as to this Body; and our Souls appear before our Judge. We cannot deny, but within a few Years, every one of us ſhall be gone from hence, and fare in the other World, according to what we have done here, whether Good or Evil. Who is he that does pretend to believe, he ſhall never Dye? *The Living know that they ſhall Dye*, 9 *Job* 5. And yet we make no haſte to be Ready: To do the Works of him that ſent us while it is Day: To get the Queſtion well Reſolv'd, Whether we are Reconcil'd to God, and our Hopes of Heaven well grounded? Whether we ſhall be Sav'd or Periſh? Tho' we know we have but a little Time to Reſolve this Queſtion, yet every little Thing diverts us from ſuch an Inquiry.

The Time of Life, tho' expreſt by *a Day*, is not to be underſtood of a Natural Day, conſiſting of twenty four Hours, but being oppos'd to *Night*, the Brevity of it is ſet forth by an Artificial Day, which is but half that ſpace. Tho' ſome have a longer day than others, yet it can laſt no longer then our Natural Life: And he that has a great Work to do, and but one Day to do it in, hath need to mind it with all his Might. Eſpecially,

2. Conſidering that the Opportunity is *Irrevocable*, when once it is *paſt*. There is no Work, nor Thought, nor Wiſdom in the Grave. Our Lamp ſhall never more be lighted, when once extinguiſh'd. We can never have our Glaſs turn'd again, when once it is Run out. When our Sun is Set, it ſhall Riſe no more. *If a Man dye, ſhall he live again?* 14 *Job* 14. Shall he ever have a Time of Trial more? *As the Cloud is conſumed, and vaniſheth away, ſo he that goeth down to the Grave ſhall come up no more,* 7 Job 9. Or, as it is expreſt in another Place of the ſame Book, 14 *Chap.*11,12. *And as the Waters fail from the Sea, and the Flood decayeth and drieth up; ſo Man lyeth down, and riſeth not till the Heavens be no more.* And again, 16 *Chap.*laſt; *When a few Years are come, I ſhall go the Way whence I ſhall not return.* But, as the Tree falleth, it muſt lye for ever. And therefore, if ever you are Converted and Turned to God, it muſt be *now*. If ever you will do any Thing to work out your own Salvation, it muſt be before the Grave and Hell have ſhut their Mouths upon you. If you will not know the Things of your Peace in this your Day, they will for ever be hid from your Eyes.

Shall we not therefore, attend the Work and Buſineſs of Life with all our Might, ſince our haſty Time can never be Recall'd? Yeſterday will never come again. O! What would miſerable Sinners on a Death-bed give, for the Recovery of a little Time, which they fooliſhly trifl'd and ſinn'd away. Then they'l cry out, Give us of your Oyl, for our Lamps are going out: But, *this is the Day of Salvation*; the only accepted Time: And, when this is gone, there is no other to ſucceed. *Now*, you may Pray in Hope, and Seek the Mercy of God in Hope; for his Grace is Offer'd, and his Spirit is Striving with you. As yet 'tis not too late; but when once your Life is ended, the Gulph is fix'd for ever: There is no further Opportunity, or Time of Trial. We that would *now* perſwade you to ſerious Diligence, ſhall ſhortly have done our Work, and never ſpeak to you more. You that have *now* the Mercy of God in Chriſt offer'd you, ſhall ſhortly have it ſo no more. You have *now* many Helps, and Calls, and Warnings; but, it will not be ſo always, or long. Shortly, you your ſelves will ſay, *It is too late*; there is no Hope; My Day is paſt; the Door is ſhut.

3. Conſider, that this ſhort Seaſon that is Irrecoverable, when paſt, is *very uncertain in its Continuance*. And will you venture your Everlaſting Hopes upon ſuch an Uncertainty, as, whether you ſhall live a Year, or Month, or Week longer? Can you tell how much longer the Patience of God may bear with any of you? Can you ſay he will do it, for a Month or a Fortnight? What if you are Young? You know we do not Dye in the order we are born, and go to the Grave by Seniority. How many Thouſands are there, that God has reſolv'd ſhall Dye this next Week, who now believe nothing of it? Why may not you, or I, be of that Number! You think your Candle is like to burn many Years longer; but, it may be ſuddenly blown out: And, will you venture *your All* upon the Uncertainty of a little borrowed Breath, that when it goes forth, you know not whether you ſhall have Power to draw it in again? How eaſily can God ſend a Meſſenger to Cut the Thred of Life, and then the unprepared Soul muſt drop into Endleſs Torment: Can you Hear, Conſider, and Apply this, and not Reſolve to mind the Work and Buſineſs of Life with all your Might.

4. Conſider, that after the Seaſon of Working is over, *a Time of Reckoning will come*. When the Day was paſt, and the Evening come, we read, that *the Lord of the Vineyard ſaith to his Steward*, [illegible], *call the Labourers, and give them every one their Hire, beginning from the laſt unto the firſt*, 20 Matth. 8. He that began early, and he that began late; He that was ſlothful, and he that was diligent; He that came into the Vineyard at the eleventh Hour, and he that hath ſerved God from his Youth: All muſt then come to a Reckoning, and Receive a diſtinct and ſeparate Portion, according as their Works have been. Then muſt we give an Account of all our Time, and all our other Talents; of all our Words, and Thoughts, and Actions: Of all the Good we might have done, and did not; and all the Evil we have committed, and might have ſhun'd. As ſoon as your Day is over, your Final State is determined. *It is appointed for All Men once to Dye, and after that comes Judgment*, 9 Heb. 27. Before your Friends have laid your Bodies in the Grave, or finiſhed your Funeral; or even dreſt it in a Woollen Shrowd, and put it in a Coffin; you ſhall know and feel the Truth of theſe Things.

5. Conſider, That *this Work* and Buſineſs of Life, is no ſuch trivial, eaſie, inconſiderable Matter, as not to *deſerve* and *need our utmoſt* Diligence. There are ſo many Difficulties to be overcome, we had need begin betimes, and ſet about it in good earneſt: It will be all little enough; for the Righteous themſelves, with all their Diligence, ſhall *ſcarcely be ſaved*. You have a great and mighty Work to diſpatch; and if you have trifl'd hitherto, or ſerv'd the Devil, the World, and the Fleſh; All your former Work muſt be undone; All, that for many Years paſt you have been doing. Every Step in the way to Hell, which you have trod, you muſt go back by Repentance and Humiliation.

Think not to get to Heaven by a few lazy Wiſhes, or faint Endeavours; now and then to do ſomething in Religion. We are Soldiers liſted under Chriſt, and muſt reſolve to fight, and look for Oppoſition. We have inward Difficulties to overcome, as well as many from without: Our Hearts are Vain, and Carnal, and Senſual; prepoſleſt with the Objects of Sence; under the Power of Earthly Things; Diſaffected to God and Chriſt; They muſt be Renew'd and Sanctified. The Devil is a vigilant, malicious,

ous, powerful Enemy ; he muſt be overcome. The Cuſtoms and Examples of others , and the common Opinion and Practice of the World , concur to make our Work difficult : And yet , we muſt break thro' all Obſtacles, and deny our ſelves, and follow Chriſt with fixed purpoſe of Heart, and ſtick at nothing which he calls us to.

Strive to enter into the ſtrait Gate, and not think it will open like the *Iron Gate* to *Peter*, of its own accord. We muſt deny and renounce thoſe Vanities that once we took for our Happineſs ; and take the bleſſedneſs of Heaven for our Portion. We muſt change our Maſter, our End, and our Way. Old Things muſt be done away , and all Things become New. The Favour of God, his Image and Service , his Will and his Glory muſt be prefer'd before all Things ; And Chriſt be our only Hope and Refuge, whom before we ſlighted. It's a great Work for an undone Sinner to believe in a Saviour, and ſuch a Saviour ; intirely to Truſt to his Merits , Righteouſneſs , Counſel, Conduct , powerful Operations, and prevailing Interceſſion, for all his preſent and future Hopes : And yet, all that Believe on him muſt do ſo ; Renouncing the Fleſh, the World and the Devil, in Expectation of his promiſed, unſeen Glory.

And, after we are Devoted to him, what a Work hath a Chriſtian to do; To mortifie Corruption; to increaſe Grace; to live in the ſuitable vigorous Exerciſes of it, and to preſs on towards Perfection: and yet, to know that Perſeverance to the End is alſo neceſſary; will not this Work deſerve your utmoſt Diligence? How little can Loyterers, and Lazy ſlothful Chriſtians do of all this? There muſt be Strength and Power; there muſt be Labour and Induſtry; Wiſdom and Skill; Conſideration and Contrivance; Reſolution and Conſtancy, unto the due performance of this Work: Conſidering the Difficulties to be overcome, the Temptations to be reſiſted; Obſtacles to be remov'd; Conflicts to be expected; Hardſhips to be undergone, and Self-denying Duties to be perform'd. So that Slothfulneſs or Delays are very unſuitable, conſidering our preſent difficult Work, and that we ſtand ſo near the Grave, where none of it can be done.

*6.* Conſider further, How difficult ſoever *this Work* is, it is of *abſolute Neceſſity*: It muſt be done, or we are Loſt for ever. Our Life is repreſented as a

Race; a Warfare; a Labouring in the Vineyard: There is no Crown, Victory, Harveſt, Reward, Salvation without it; There is no eſcaping everlaſting Deſtruction without it. The Kingdom of Heaven muſt be Won or Loſt; and we be either Saved or Damned, according as we mind this Work with all our Might, or Refuſe, or Delay to do ſo. And, 'tis a Work *you your ſelves* muſt mind; it cannot be done by any other for you. Your beſt Friends and neareſt Relations cannot Repent, and Believe, and Obey the Goſpel for your Salvation.

And therefore, let none dare ſay, this is more then needs, that leſs will ſerve: Who is the fitteſt Judge of what is needful, God or you? Whoſe Judgment is like to ſtand concerning the Terms of Salvation, his or yours? And, will not the bleſſed Recompence of Reward, make amends for all your Diligence? How little is it, if compar'd with the Miſery of loſt Souls? And do you think that ever any repented the Pains and Labour they were at, in preparing for Heaven? But, whether you believe it or no, conſider it or no, the Word of God ſhall be punctually perform'd; and if you will not be Saved upon theſe Terms, you ſhall as certainly Dye and Periſh in your

Sins, as if you were already in the Place of Torment.

7. Conſider further, That none, who now Scorn, or Delay, or neglect this neceſſary Work and Buſineſs of Life, but *ſhall wiſh they had minded it* with all their Might. They ſhall wiſh in vain, and too late, when the Night has overtaken them, that they had been as Diligent, as the moſt holy Saint on Earth; and would give Ten thouſand Worlds, if they had the Diſpoſe of them, for One ſuch Day of Grace and Mercy, as now they trifle away. O! Think what dying Sinners or departed Souls judge of the Value of Time, and of the Neceſſity of preparing for Eternity: And, if you verily believe, you ſhall hereafter wiſh, that you had minded ſerious Godlineſs with all your Might; Do it Now, that you may not be Self-condemned.

8. Conſider, that ſerious perſevering Diligence will be *Comfortable at laſt*; The Succeſs is certain, and the Reward is glorious. We need not fear a Diſappointment: Our Labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord; They that ſeek me *early* ſhall find me, *Prov.* 8. 17. The great End of All, the Salvation of our Souls, ſhall be accompliſhed. And what Incouragement is it to Strive, and Run,

and Fight; and give all Diligence: when 'tis for Heaven and Eternal Life, which God, who cannot lye, has promiſed.

*Firſt*, Let me hereupon Exhort *All* that hear me, to utmoſt Diligence, while Time and Life continue, to prepare for their Everlaſting State. *Whatſoever thy Hand finds to do, do it with all thy Might.* We have loſt a great deal of Time already: O! Let us be diligent now, to Redeem it? We have loiter'd and trifl'd a great while already; let us now awake, and mend our pace. We have been diligent to ſerve the World, and the Devil, and make Proviſion for the Fleſh: Diligent to Deſtroy, Defile, and Damn our Souls; let us now be more diligent to ſave them. Are you not convinced, that 'tis high time to awake out of ſleep? to ſhake off your careleſs Indifference and Sloth? Let the Time paſt of your Lives ſuffice, and be reflected on with ſhame, wherein you have neglected your great Work. You are told how difficult and neceſſary a Work you have to mind; what need you have to do ſo, with all your Might, leſt Time be gone, and Life be ended before your Work be done. O! Hear the Voice of Chriſt that yet

Calls you by his Word and Spirit, to Seek his Mercy, and Accept his Favour while it may be had! O! that he would Open your Eyes, to let you See the Certainty of the Inviſible, Eternal World! O! that I could perſwade you, of the Neceſſity of *Now*, preparing for it: And, that notwithſtanding all the Difficulty you have heard of, you would Remember, and Believe, that 'tis an Honourable, Pleaſant, Delightful Work that you are call'd to. When once you come to Live to God, in hopes of Eternal Life, and are led by the Spirit of Chriſt, thro' whom you may be able to do all things, you will then find his Yoke eaſie, and his Burthen light; and that his Commands are not Grievous, but that in the Keeping of them there is a great Reward.

Think how Diligent and Induſtrious are other Men, to ſeek after a Portion in this World. How much more Pains do many take for a little Money then would ſuffice to Secure their Salvation? How diligent are ſome, to ſeek that which cannot ſatisfie them; and others in purſuit of that which will Deſtroy them? And ſhall not we be Diligent that pretend to Seek for *Everlaſting Life?* Shall *We* be leſs careful about the Concerns of Eternity, and the Everlaſting World, where we muſt be *for Ever*; then others are to have a little Portion of Outward Conveniencies, during their ſtay here? Shall we ſpend all our Time and Strength about this Body, and this preſent Life, without any Care or Thought what will become of us for Ever? Shall not we that have ſo many Warnings, and Calls by the Deaths of others, to look before us, who have ſo many Mercies to incourage us; ſo many Afflictions to ſpur and quicken us, and ſometimes Sickneſs to tell us we are near *Eternity*, and muſt Dye? Shall not we that have ſo often confeſs'd our Sloth, and bewail'd it? who have ſmarted for our Folly, and beg'd pardon for our Negligence and Remiſneſs; and promis'd and ingag'd, ſo often, and ſolemnly to double our Diligence; ſhall not *We* Reſolve to mind our great Work with all our Might?

Say not, that you have not Strength; that you can do nothing of your Selves; that without the Grace of God, all that you can do is to no purpoſe, and you know not whether he will give you that Grace. Will you not conſider how ready *God* is to aſſiſt you, if you value his Grace, and ſeek it, in a humble ſence of your Need of it? No Father on Earth is more ready to give Bread to a ſtarving Child, then the God of all Grace, to give his Holy Spirit to them that Ask it. You can doubtleſs do more then ever yet you have done, to ſeek that Strength, and Grace, and Power, which God by his Spirit is ready to give: And you believe that you can do more, becauſe ſometimes you reſolve you will.

But what if all your Help muſt come from Heaven, and yet this Work muſt be done, is of abſolute Neceſſity; Is that a Diſcouragement? Will you ſit ſtill, and contentedly periſh in your Sloth, without beſtirring your ſelves to ſeek His help? You Reſiſt the Spirit and Grieve him; You Quench his Motions, &c. Hearken not to his Suggeſtions: Otherwiſe you might have more of the Aſſiſtance and Help of the Spirit, then you have; and you would find, that *He that is in us, is greater than he that is in the World.* Did you ever know of any that ſought the Grace of God in earneſt, and were deny'd; that did give all Diligence to work out their Salvation, and were rejected? And, why do you think, God will make you the *firſt Example?* All our Hopes of Acceptance with God is upon the Account of the Merits and

Righteouſneſs of Chriſt; and all the Good that we are inabled to do, is by the Influence of the Spirit of Chriſt: But, this is very conſiſtent with our utmoſt Diligence, in Obedience to him. And, durſt you ſay, that you have done all that you can, and yet God deny'd his Grace? or ever will to any ſuch? If God be found of thoſe that ſeek him not; will he not much more be ſo, of thoſe that inquire after him, and are Diligent in the Uſe of his appointed Means?

We have great Incouragement, whereever the Goſpel is preached, to apply our ſelves to the Throne of Grace, for all that Strength we need, in the Chriſtian Warfare: partly, from the Goodneſs and Merciful Nature of God; partly, from the gracious Undertaking of Chriſt, as Mediator; from the Sufficiency of his Death and Satisfaction to ſave all that Believe; from the Goſpel Grant of Pardon and Life, upon true Repentance and Faith unfeign'd; the many Gracious Invitations and Promiſes to allure and perſwade us; And may conclude that none are ſhut out of Heaven, to whom the Goſpel is publiſhed; but ſuch as exclude and ſhut out themſelves; *who will not come unto Chriſt that they may have Life*. There is nothing required, and commanded ed in one part of Scripture, but we have ſomewhere or other, a Promiſe of Grace to perform it : And therefore, the ſame thing is aſcribed to God as his Work in ſome Scriptures, which is required of us in others.

*Secondly*, More particularly let me Apply my ſelf to the Younger Sort : Look often and ſeriouſly into the Grave, where no Work can be done ; and conſider how near you are to it ; and that tho' you came into the World but a few Years ago, it cannot be long e're you muſt Remove. Do not look upon Death as at a mighty Diſtance from you. It is a very miſtaken and falſe Reckoning, to think that ſuch and ſuch muſt Dye before you, becauſe they are Elder : And that becauſe you have liv'd but a few Years in the World, you have many more to come. How many Children do Parents follow to the Grave, and ſee Buried out of their ſight ? How ſoon may a Fever carry away one in his full Strength ? No man is more Frail then another ; nor more certain of to Morrow. They that are Sound, and they that are Sick ; They that are in Infancy, and they that are Grown up ; They that are at Sea, or in the Army, and they that ſit at Home by the Fire's ſide; They are *All equally near to Death.*

Therefore do not Reckon upon Twenty or Thirty or Forty Years more yet to come. *I am Old*, ſays the Patriarch, *and I know not the Day of my Death:* But Young People may ſay it with equal Truth, *I am Young*, but know not the Day, nor Hour of Mine. Is not your Breath in the Hand of God, by whom the Number of your Months is Regiſtred? If the Wicked Servant ſay, *My Lord delays his Coming*, (*Luke* 12. 45.) The Lord of that Servant will Come as a Thief in the Night, or in a Day when he looked not for him. *You ſhall not ſurely Dye*; you may Live was the Devil's firſt Lye; And he repeats it ſtill to Young People: But, pray think on all Thoſe, whom you have known to Dye: Have there not been more *Younger* then Elder? Do not more Dye before Thirty then after? It is more Common of the Two, for Young People to Dye then Elder. Therefore put not off the great Buſineſs of Life, becauſe you are *Young*; You may be in Hell before you are *Old.* He that intends to mind ſerious Religion *Hereafter*, may never live to that Time to which he has adjourn'd it. *Now*, Remember your Creator; *Now*, in the Days of your Youth. You were Born in Sin; You have Committed many Sins in your Childhood and Youth to be repented of. You are not too Young to Repent, becauſe you are not too Young to Sin: And becauſe You are not too Young to Dye, nor too Young to be Damned, if you Dye in your Sins: And will you venture your Everlaſting Damnation, upon the Preſumption of a Long Life, and a Future Repentance? when God may either ſhorten your Lives, or when you are Old, deny that Grace, which you now Refuſe in the Days of your Youth.

Let me Apply this to the more Special Occaſion of this Diſcourſe, *viz.*

*Uſe* III. To Lament and Improve the Death of a worthy young Miniſter, Mr. *Samuel Byfield*, who was but juſt enter'd into the Lord's Vineyard, and called away, when he began to be eminently Uſeful, dying at the Age of Seven and Twenty, after he had been for ſome time ſettled Paſtor of a Church of Chriſt at *Plymouth* in *Devon.* His Parents and other Relations, and many of his Friends and Acquaintance living here, it is far from an Indecency to make publick mention of his Death in *London*; from whence he was ſent into the Country. And they who knew him, (as many of you did) ſhould be ſeriouſly affected with *his Death*, and wiſely improve it. We ſhould be very unjuſt to his Memory, and to his Extraordinary Character, if no Notice ſhould be taken of it, becauſe the Loſs is Publick, when ſuch are removed. In the ſhort Account I ſhall give of him, I ſhall not ſpeak a Word but what I know to be true my ſelf, or have it from ſome of his Fellow Students and Companions, who for ſeveral Years were Educated together, and intimately Acquainted with him.

He was always in his Youth thought to promiſe ſomething Extraordinary, having a Rich Fancy, and a Solid Judgment, with an Inquiſitive, Searching, Soaring Genius: He would not take Things on truſt, but endeavour'd to know the Grounds and Reaſons of Things. He had a Rational Head, and a Sprightly Lively Thought, with a calm Temper, which made him conſiderable for Prudence beyond his Years. As his Religious Parents devoted and deſigned him all along for the Miniſtry, and deny'd them themſelves to qualifie, and fit him, by a Liberal Education for it; ſo from the firſt, he heartily inclined unto it, and carefully improv'd all Advantages for Learning, both at Home and abroad. He was not contented with an Ordinary and Common Pitch of Knowledge, but was Curious and Inquiſitive beyond moſt, to ſearch out Truth; having an Inclination and Aptneſs to beat Things out himſelf, where his Helps fail'd him. As to Learning, I am aſſur'd from very capable Judges, who knew him more intimately then I did, that he was an Accurate Linguiſt, a good Mathematician, a conſiderable Hiſtorian, and no mean Philoſopher. And if any thing hinder'd him from being a great Orator, (for he knew what to ſay, and in the beſt Words,) it was only his Diffidence and Diſtruſt of himſelf, his extraordinary Modeſty and Baſhfulneſs.

Few young Students in this Age have apply'd themſelves to the Study of Divinity, with a better Stock of Polite Learning, or with a more generous and free Spirit, not to imbibe the Principles of any Man whatſoever, any further than the Grounds they went upon, and the Reaſon of their Opinion, ſhould induce him to be of their Mind.

He made the Sacred Scriptures his Standard, and converſt diligently with them in their Originals; endeavoured to reduce all he knew and learnt into Practice. He had this Character of a Great and Improved Mind; that he hated Pedantry in Learning; and Bigotry, or a party Spirit in Religion. He was more deſirous to be really Learned and Good, then to appear, and be thought ſo. He liked not Affectation as to either, in Others; and ſhun'd it in Himſelf. He was not Cenſorious of other Men, but Candid in his Sentiments and Opinions of them: Free with the Meaneſt, and Charitable to all from whom he differ'd; and a great Enemy to Feuds and Diviſions, and had a peculiar Talent in Reconciling them. His Principles were truly Chriſtian and Catholick. If he were askt what was his Religion; he would ſay, and could make no other Anſwer, but that he was a *Chriſtian*, and a *Proteſtant.* And if any, even of his beſt Friends, diſcovered any undue Warmth againſt other Proteſtants, upon our unhappy Controverſies, he would often ſay, *We can never expect to allay Heat with Heat:* And God knows, we have ſad Inſtances in this City of the Truth of this.

He had occaſion to make uſe of this Calm Temper to the Glory of God, and the Honour of Religion in the Place where the Providence of God call'd him, in the Town where he liv'd and dy'd; which makes his Death ſo much lamented there; as appears by ſeveral Letters I have ſeen upon this Occaſion, which ſignifie a very deep ſence of his Extraordinary Worth; and their anſwerable Loſs in his Removal: And this by all Sorts of People, of one Perſwaſion and Denomination, and another. For as he eſteem'd, and honour'd, and familiarly convers'd with Learned and Sober Men of the Church of *England*, ſo, many of them eſteem'd, reſpected, and valu'd him. He was not a Nonconformiſt, or Diſſenting Miniſter, but upon a deliberate and impartial weighing of Matters on both ſides, by Principle and fixed Judgment: not, be ſure, for any Secular Advantage, but out of Choice and Conſcience: for he had conſiderable Offers made him, if he would have fall'n in with the National Eſtabliſhment, by Some in whoſe Power it was to have preferr'd him, double to what he ever got, or was like to get by Nonconformity.

As for his Diligence, Serioufneſs, Acceptance and Succeſs in his Miniſtry at

*Plymouth*, I might ſay much: And need but Tranſcribe the Letters written during his Sickneſs, and ſince his Death, upon that Occaſion, from ſuch as enjoy'd the Benefit of his Labours there. Which was confirm'd by the decent Reſpects and Honour, they expreſt for him in his Funeral.

His own Apprehenſions of Death, under his Languiſhing and Weakneſs, he ſignified in Letters to his particular Friends, with a truly Chriſtian Spirit: And with ſo much Tenderneſs and Affection to his Parents, as juſtly raiſeth his Character as *a Son*, deſiring they might not know, (eſpecially his Mother,) the worſt of his Caſe, and the Danger he was in. The Kind, Dutiful, and Reſpectful Expreſſions to that purpoſe, which I have ſeen in Letters, were very Affecting.

Let his Parents Rejoyce and Bleſs God that they had ſuch a Son, and that they Devoted him to the Service of the Temple, and Educated him for it; and that they liv'd to ſee him begin to be Uſeful: For if he did not live to ſhine long, that was no part of their Duty, but belongs to God to determine. They may be as much accepted, as to their part, as if their Son had liv'd to Fourſcore. They may, and ought to be ſatisfied in the Diſcharge of their Duty to God; having endeavour'd with Succeſs to prepare and fit him for Publick Service: How long he ſhould be imploy'd, was not in their Power to chuſe; nor ought they to oppoſe their Will (and I hope they don't) to his Wiſe and Soveraign Pleaſure, who giveth no Account of his Matters. Let them think with Thankfulneſs and Joy where he now is, being entred, we hope, into the Joy of his Lord. *He ſhall not come to you, but you ſhall go to him.* God hath Honour'd you to be the Parents of ſuch a Son; and to have done a great deal with ſerious Faithfulneſs, to bring him up to Honour God. He doth and will accept you, (I doubt not) and Reward and Bleſs you for it. If you do not diſpleaſe him by Immoderate Mourning, ſince God hath declar'd his Pleaſure.

Now, if theſe things be true of him, which I have briefly mention'd, ſhall I need to tell you, that you ought to Lament his Death as a Publick Loſs, not only to his Relations and Acquaintance, (whereof there are very many now preſent) but we ſhould all of us, lay to heart the Death of ſuch Young Men, qualified and fitted for Publick Work. Their Preparations for long Uſefulneſs, and ſeveral Years Study in order to it, are hereby loſt to the Church, tho' not to themſelves. Alas! if young Children are taken away, many fond Parents can hardly bear it; tho', they know not what a Grief they may hereafter be, nor how they will prove. But the Death of ſuch a one, is unſpeakably a greater Loſs to Parents, to Relations, to the whole Kingdom, and to the Church of Chriſt.

If *Elder Miniſters* are taken away, who have had the Honour to be Uſeful to the ordinary Life of Man, and have ſerv'd their Generation according to the Will of God; both Nature and Grace will teach us, in ſuch Caſes, to ſubmit. Tho', it muſt be confeſt, that one Year of the Life of an Aged Experienced Miniſter, may be of more Uſe, then ſeveral Years while Younger, and leſs Experienced. Do but conſider the need we have, in City and Country, of Serious, Faithful, Learned, Upright Miniſters; of healing Calm Spirits; and how much Miſchief is done by thoſe of a contrary Character; the Removal of any ſuch as theſe is ſo much the more to be lamented. And let none over-look the Loſs, by ſaying, God hath decreed it; He hath determin'd he ſhould Live no longer: That is doubtleſs true; but it doth not leſſen our Loſs, nor will it make our Lamentation unreaſonable or unjuſt. For God's Decrees reach to all his Judgments, as well as other Events; but our Sins are the Cauſe of them, and we ought to lay it to Heart. The more Divided, and Defiled the preſent State of Things in the Church and Nation, is thought to be, the greater is ſuch a Loſs: when for want of ſuch Learning and Piety, Candour and Charity, and good Temper, as he was valued for, our *Breaches* are widened and kept open, that might otherwiſe be heal'd. This makes his Loſs the greater to all that knew him, and to the Publick.

But let me not forget my ſelf in ſpeaking of his being *Loſt*; 'tis only to us; for as to himſelf, he is *not loſt*; nor are his Preparatory Studies and Education loſt: for by theſe, his Mind was improv'd, his Soul enlarg'd; and by knowing more Truth, he was enabled to know God better, and love him more; and ſo to be more fitted for Heaven, than he would have been by another Education and Imployment. No, *He is not loſt*; he is ſafer and better; and better pleas'd, I doubt not, in the Upper, Peaceable, Holy World, than he could have been by living longer in this divided World, Church, and Nation. And conſidering how Things are, and how little better they are like to be, as to any preſent Proſpect; for a Prepared Soul to leave this World, whether a Miniſter or Private Chriſtian, whether Young or Elder, if he get ſafe to Heaven, we muſt ſay as to the very Seaſon of his Departure, that this is a good Time to Dye in. But while we Live, let's Remember this Text; and do all the Good we can, as we have Opportunity, and do it *with all our Might*; becauſe *the Night cometh when no Work can be done: And there is no Work, nor Device, nor Operation in the Grave, whither we are going.*

---

FINIS.